



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

## **Getting Started**

**This packet has basic information about the services offered by the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.**

**The information should answer many of your questions. You can ask more questions during your orientation or later, when you work with your counselor.**

**Here are the steps you will go through as part of the DVR Program:**

### **1. Orientation**

- Learn how the program works from start to finish.
- Decide if you want to apply for services.

Some offices give a group orientation. Others give a one-on-one orientation.

### **2. Intake Interview and Applying for Services**

This is when your counselor learns about you, your disability and how it causes work problems. The meeting takes about an hour.

- You meet privately with a DVR counselor or counselor's assistant.
- You fill out an application form.
- You fill out any release forms we need to get copies of your records. The records help tell us if you qualify.

### **3. Finding Out if You Qualify for Help**

Sometimes a counselor can tell right away if you qualify. Other times it can take up to 60 days, occasionally longer. It depends on whether we need to send for medical records or have you evaluated by a doctor. Your counselor can tell you what needs to happen to qualify for services.

### **4. Identifying Your Job Goal and Planning Services You Need**

You and your counselor decide on a job goal that makes sense for your disability. It should also make sense based on what job

*Continued on back*

# ***Jobs are Alaska's Future***

openings there are. DVR can help you find your talents and interests. We can also help you search the job market. You and your counselor talk about the employment problems that bring you to DVR. Together you decide what services you need to get a job.

## **5. Writing a Plan for Employment**

You must have a written plan to get the services you need. We call it your individualized plan for employment (IPE). Your counselor can help you with this. It describes the steps you will take to meet your work goal.

## **6. Completing the IPE**

You can start getting the help you need after you and your counselor agree to your plan. How long it takes you to complete the plan depends on you and your needs. The plan needs to be completed within 90 days from when you are made eligible for DVR services unless you agree to an extension.

## **7. Job Searching and Getting a Job**

After you complete the services in your plan, you search for a job until you get one. Your counselor can help you with this.

## **8. Following Up and Closing Your Case**

Your counselor checks how you are doing for 90 days after you get a job. Then DVR closes your case if all is going well.



*DVR has this information in alternative formats.  
Ask your local DVR office.*



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## Who Pays for Services?

You can choose from many different services. Some are free. You may have to help pay for others. You and your counselor choose services because you NEED them to go to work.

### Free Services

- Medical exam to see if you qualify and to help plan your career.
- Counseling, especially about disability issues that affect you.
- Help choosing the job goal that's right for you.
- Referral to other agencies that can help you.
- Tests and other tools to better understand your talents, etc.
- On-the-job training with a real employer while you work.
- A short-term job try-out called a "Community Assessment."
- Training designed for you, to help you adjust to working.
- Job search and placement services.
- Interpreter, reader, and tutoring services.

Also listed here are other services that you may need to reach your job goal. These services have a cost to them. You and your counselor will decide together if you can help pay for any that you choose.

### Services You May Help Pay For

We test whether you can pay for the services listed below. We will also ask you about income in your household, savings accounts, etc.

- All training (except on-the-job training).
- Books, training supplies, tools, equipment (including computers), and other supplies.
- Living expenses, see your counselor for details.

Continued on back



## ***Jobs are Alaska's Future***

- Transportation: getting from place to place.
- Medical care and therapy.
- Self-employment.
- Devices that help with your disability.
- Services to family members.
- Work licenses.
- Any other goods or services.

Do you get Public Assistance or SSI? If so, you will not have to pay for the services you need. Other state and federal programs offer some of the same services as DVR. Sometimes we may ask you to apply for and use their services instead of ours.

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**Jobs**

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## Do I Qualify?

**If you qualify for services, our goal is to help you get work that you enjoy and can do.**

### To Qualify:

- You must have trouble getting or keeping a job because of a mental or physical problem. We can find someone to assess your disability if you need it. We can pay for this, too.
- You must need services to prepare for, get, or keep a job.

Do you get SSI or SSDI (social security for a disability)? If you do, you probably qualify for DVR help if your goal is to work.

### What We Need from You:

- Copies of medical records about your disability. We can get the records from your doctor if you give us permission in writing saying it is OK, or ...
- Proof that you get social security for a disability such as check stubs, direct deposit statements, or your OK for us to contact Social Security.
- Your work history: what jobs you have had before.
- Your application: a form you have filled out to apply for help.
- A meeting with a DVR counselor. We call it an "interview."

We assume that you can work if you have the right supports and services.

Usually we can tell if you qualify in 60 days or less. Sometimes it takes longer.

We may ask you to show that you can work by taking part in a job "try-out." In a job tryout, we get you a temporary job with a real employer.

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## **Informed Choice**

**You get to make choices in your program.**

### **What are some of the choices you can make?**

- You choose the job goal that fits your interests, talents, needs, and values.
- You choose how much help you want to write your employment plan.
- You choose the services you need to overcome the problems that brought you to us. You get to choose who provides most services, too.
- You help decide how long you will be in the program.

### **How does DVR help you make choices?**

- Our staff gives you the information to feel confident when you face each choice. Think of us as your career consultants.
- Early on, you and your counselor talk about the work problems caused by your disability. We call these your "barriers to employment."
- Knowing your problems helps you and your counselor decide on steps to overcome them. It also helps you figure out what services you need to reach your job goal.
- You and your counselor share responsibility for your choices.

### **What are the guidelines for making choices?**

- Making choices in your program does not mean you can have anything you want. Your choices must make sense. They must give good value for their cost. And they must help you reach your job goal.
- The job goal you choose must make sense, too
  - Can you do the work?
  - Are people needed to fill this job field where you want to live?
- You choose services because you need them, not just because you want them.

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## **Rights & Responsibilities**

**You have rights and responsibilities when you use DVR services.**

### **Your Rights**

- To be treated politely, professionally, and with respect by DVR staff.
- To find out if you qualify for our services within 60 days after you apply. You can agree to give us more time if we need it.
- To have your records, phone calls, and letters kept private. Sometimes, DVR may give out some information without telling you. Ask your counselor about this.
- To make informed choices.
- To write your own plan for getting a job within 90 days of eligibility, with or without our help. We call this your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). You can review your plan with your counselor at least once each year to make changes.
- To get free help from the Client Assistance Program anytime. The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is separate from DVR. CAP can help you if you are having problems with DVR.
- To appeal any DVR decisions or actions that you don't agree with.

### **Your Responsibilities**

- To treat DVR staff politely and with respect.
- To take part in getting the information you need to write and follow through with your employment plan.
- To pay what you can for the parts of your plan that cost money.
- To apply for and use other sources of money to pay for what you need. For example, you might apply for a Pell grant to go to school. Or you might use health insurance for medical care. Your counselor will help you with this.
- To follow through with the services you choose as best you can.
- To meet with your counselor regularly, especially if problems come up that affect your plan.
- To go to work after completing your program.

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## **Your Plan for Getting Work**

**You need a written work plan to get services.**

We call a written plan to get services an "Individualized Plan for Employment" or "IPE."

No two people have the same plan because everyone has different needs. You choose how much help you want from your counselor in writing your plan.

**Your plan will include...**

- Job Goal: You choose this.
- Barriers to getting a job caused by your disability.
- Steps you plan to take to reach your job goal.
- Services you need to help you get a job.
- From whom do you want to get the services.
- Cost: How much each service costs and who pays for it.
- Timelines: When services begin and end and when you expect to start working.
- Progress: How you will measure your steps to getting a job.
- Responsibilities: Yours and DVR's.

**Ways to Write Your Plan**

- Work on it together with your DVR counselor.
- Do it by yourself.
- Work on it with a counselor who does not work for DVR.
- Work on it with your guardian or representative.
- Write it by hand or type it using forms that DVR gives you.
- Work on it with a disability advocacy organization.

We give you the information, forms, and any technical help you need. Once you draft your plan, you and your DVR counselor must talk about it and agree about everything in it. You may need to add or change something. Your services can start as soon as you both agree to the plan and sign it.

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## How do I Pick a Career?

**Not sure what career to go after? DVR and Alaska Job Center staff can help you make a choice.**

**We have many tools and staff to help you ...**

- Choose a job and career that you enjoy and can do.
- Discover your job interests, talents, and skills.
- Find out what job fields have the most openings.
- Learn skills to help you apply for, interview for, and keep a job.
- Find out about schools and training programs.

In many locations, DVR and other agencies offer free workshops to help you make a career decision.

**You can use the free services at Job Centers around the state. They have ...**

- Job counselors.
- Job listings.
- Computers you can use to apply for jobs.
- Assistance to type a resume or a cover letter.

Talk to your DVR counselor about what is available where you live.

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## Having Problems with DVR?

We believe you will enjoy working with our staff. However, sometimes people don't agree. You may disagree with your counselor about your program. If you and your counselor cannot come to an agreement, you have the right to appeal any decision made by DVR about the provision or denial of our services. Your options to resolve disagreements include:

■ **Speak with the Regional Manager**

You can ask to speak with your counselor's regional manager. Many times the regional manager can help address concerns.

■ **Call the Client Assistance Program (CAP)**

CAP helps people who have problems with DVR. It is separate from DVR and their help is free for you. They can also help you with any of these other options. Call 1-800-478-1234 to find a CAP representative near you.

■ **Ask for an Appeal Review**

This is an informal meeting with a DVR staff member who has not worked on your case.

■ **Ask for Mediation Services**

Mediation is another way to clear up disagreements. A trained person, not employed by DVR, tries to help people on both sides agree.

■ **Ask for an Impartial Due Process Hearing**

An Impartial Due Process Hearing is a formal review by a trained impartial hearing officer. The decision of the impartial hearing officer is considered final. *Note: DVR cannot pay future legal services.*

### **How to Request an Appeal Review, Mediation or Impartial Due Process Hearing**

1. Send a written letter by mail within 30 days of the action or decision you do not agree with to:  
DVR Appeal Review Officer  
P.O. Box 115516  
Juneau, AK 99811-5516  
Fax: 907-269-3632
2. The letter should describe the problem, including the date of the decision or action you want reviewed. The letter must also state whether you are asking for an Appeal Review, Mediation or an Impartial Due Process Hearing.

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