
CHAPTER 19: COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS

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SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS

Comparable services and benefits means services and benefits that are provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other Federal, State, or local public agencies, by health insurance, or by employee benefits; available to the individual at the time needed to ensure the progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome in his/her individualized plan for employment (IPE); and commensurate to the services that the individual would otherwise receive from DBVI. (For purposes of this definition, comparable benefits do not include awards and scholarships based on merit.)

Extreme medical risk means the probability of substantially increasing functional impairment or death if medical services, including mental health services, are not provided expeditiously.

SECTION 2: GENERAL POLICY

A. General Policy

1. Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services to an eligible individual except those services listed in “B” of this Section, DBVI shall determine whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual;
2. If comparable services or benefits exist, DBVI shall use them to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of vocational rehabilitation services; and
3. If comparable services or benefits exist but are not available to the individual at the time needed to satisfy the needs in the IPE, DBVI may provide the vocational rehabilitation services until those comparable services and benefits become available.

B. Exempt Services

The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under “A” of this Section:

1. Assessment for determining eligibility (and, if applicable, priority) for DBVI services;
2. Assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs;

3. Vocational rehabilitation counseling, guidance, information and referral services;
4. Vocational and other training services, such as personal and vocational adjustment training, books (including those in alternative format), tools, and other training materials, except that no training or training services in an institution of higher education (universities, colleges, community or junior colleges, vocational schools, technical institutes, or hospital schools of nursing) may be paid for with DBVI funds unless maximum efforts have been made by DBVI and the individual to secure grant assistance in whole or in part from other sources to pay for that training;
5. Placement services;
6. Rehabilitation technology; and
7. Post-employment services consisting of 1 – 6 above.

C. Other Exemptions

The requirements of this Section also do not apply if:

1. The determination of the availability of comparable services or benefits under any other program would delay the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical profession; or
2. An immediate job placement would be lost due to a delay in the provision of comparable services or benefits.

D. Discussion

Although certain services may be exempt from determination of comparable services and benefits, such a determination may still be made if progress toward employment will not be jeopardized, if the individual is fully informed of the options and agrees to the determination.

Example: If a person, as the result of a work-related injury, needs a CCTV (a rehabilitation technology device), the Workers' Compensation insurance carrier may be expected to provide it. If determining whether the carrier will provide it **will not** impede progress, and the individual, with informed consent, agrees, DBVI may pursue the option with the individual. If the determination **will** impede progress and the individual, with informed consent, agrees, DBVI may provide the CCTV but the Workers' Comp.

carrier may subsequently be requested and expected to reimburse the funds expended.