Chapter 22:

Vocational Rehabilitation Services to an Individual by More Than One VR Agency

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Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Policy and Procedures Manual

Revised: February 2022

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Section I. Purpose

1. The Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) is responsible for the vocational rehabilitation of individuals who meet the definitions of blind or visually impaired. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is responsible for the vocational rehabilitation (VR) of individuals with all other disabilities who meet the DVR eligibility criteria.

In some cases, it might be appropriate for an individual to be served concurrently by another vocational rehabilitation agency (VR Agency). To be served concurrently, the consumer must meet the eligibility criteria for both agencies. This chapter will outline DBVI policy regarding concurrent vocational rehabilitation cases.

Section II. General Policy

1. Any individual who is blind or visually impaired who expresses interest in vocational rehabilitation services will be referred to DBVI unless in the opinion of the counseling staff from both agencies, the individual may be better served by more than one VR agency. DBVI will consider the following factors when determining if an individual should be served by VR agencies concurrently:
2. Which disability is the primary barrier to employment?
3. What set of services and expertise best meet the needs of the individual to help them achieve their employment goal?
4. Which other community service providers may be involved in supporting the individual to achieve their employment goal?

In cases where an individual who is blind or visually impaired is being served by DBVI, counselors may consult with other VR Agencies regarding services and resources available, without necessarily opening a concurrent case. A concurrent case would only be necessary if the individual required a combination of services and expertise from both agencies in order to achieve their employment goal.

**Examples of Cases Where a Concurrent Case Might Be Necessary**

Example A: A youth in transition who is blind and requires mobility training in order to be successful in a job. DBVI has the specific expertise and program to provide these services. However, the youth also has a developmental disability and is eligible for supported employment services through the Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD). Because DVR funds DDSD supported employment services and has an ongoing relationship with the provider, it might be beneficial for DBVI to have a concurrent case to oversee that set of services.

Example B: An adult with a significant psychiatric disability who becomes blind in their mid-forties. Because the individual has become blind later in life, it is likely they will need DBVI services to gain or retain employment. However, the individual may also need specific services and supports related to their psychiatric disability that may be better provided by DVR in order to achieve their employment goal. Opening a concurrent case may be appropriate for this individual.

Example C: A college student who is blind and attends college out of state and requires orientation and mobility training. A concurrent vocational rehabilitation case with another state will be necessary to obtain these services.

Section III. Managing Concurrent Cases

Sharing of Case Information

1. The DBVI counselor will seek the informed prior written consent of the individual to share information and coordinate services with the other VR agency.

Case Management and Coordination

1. The DBVI counselor and the other VR agency will coordinate their efforts in the development of the DBVI IPE to ensure the employment goal and planned services are aligned with the other VR Agency and that services are not duplicated. To his end, the DBVI counselor will work with the counselor from the other VR agency to:
2. Identify either the DBVI or other counselor as the case lead and primary contact for the individual:
3. Hold at least one three-way meeting with the individual, DBVI counselor and counselor for the other VR agency to establish protocols for managing the case; and
4. Coordinate development of the DBVI IPE to ensure that the employment outcome and planned services are aligned.

Provision of Services

1. The fact that an individual has a concurrent case with another VR Agency would not affect what services or supports could be provided by DBVI. All of the DBVI policies, procedures and spending guidelines would apply to the DBVI case. Services provided by other VR Agencies are considered a comparable benefit. See Chapter 19, Comparable Services and Benefits.