

Chapter 3 Assessment and Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

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MVR Policy 3.1 Use of Existing Information (IPE)

Applied Effective Date: 12/27/02

Last Edition Date: 1/ 1/2000

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 361.45(2)(I-II) Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment

State Authority: ARM 37.30.102 Vocational Rehabilitation Policy: Incorporation by Reference of Federal and State Authority.

Policy Statement:

The comprehensive assessment will be limited to information that is necessary to identify the rehabilitation needs of the individual and to develop the IPE of the eligible individual and will use existing information as a primary source.

MVR Policy 3.2 Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs

Applied Effective Date: 12/27/02

Last Edition Date: 1/ 1/2000

Federal Authority: 34CFR 361.45 Development of the Individualized (b) Plan for Employment

State Authority: ARM 37.30.102Vocational Rehabilitation Policy: Incorporation by Reference of Federal and State Authority.

Policy Statement:

It is the agencies policy to conduct assessment activities to obtain necessary additional data to the extent additional data is necessary to determine the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, including the need for supported employment, of the eligible individual. The purpose of any additional assessment is to make a determination of the employment outcomes and the objectives, nature, and scope of vocational rehabilitation services, to be included in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The assessment will use existing information as a primary source.

MVR Policy 3.3 Development of Initial Individualized Plan for Employment

Applied Effective Date: 12/27/02

Last Edition Date: 01/01/2000

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 361.45 **Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment.**

State Authority:

Policy Statement:

The MVR representative shall provide the eligible individual or the individual's representative, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, with information on the individual's options for developing an IPE, including:

1. Information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined to be appropriate by the eligible individual, from a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor in developing all or part of the IPE for the individual, and the availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of the IPE for the individual;
2. A description of the full range of components that shall be included in an IPE;
3. As appropriate:
 - a. An explanation of agency guidelines and criteria associated with financial commitments concerning an IPE;
 - b. Information on the availability of assistance in completing designated state agency forms required in developing an IPE; and
 - c. A description of the rights and remedies available to such an individual along with a description of the availability of a Client Assistance Program and information about how to contact the Client Assistance Program.

MVR Policy 3.4 Comparable Benefits

Applied Effective Date: 12/27/02

Last Edition Date: 1/ 1/2000

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 361.53 **Comparable Services and Benefits**

State Authority: ARM 37.30.102 Vocational Rehabilitation Policy: Incorporation by Reference of Federal and State Authority.

Policy Statement:

Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation service to an eligible individual, except those services exempted, MVR will determine whether comparable services and benefits are available under any other program (other than a program carried out under

this title) unless such a determination would interrupt or delay:

1. The progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the IPE of the individual;
2. An immediate job placement; or
3. The provision of such service to any individual at extreme medical risk.

Comparable benefits do not include awards and scholarships based on merit. While the pursuit of comparable benefits for rehabilitation technology is encouraged, the individual may not be required to pursue those benefits. Comparable benefits are not required for assessments for determining eligibility, counseling and guidance, referral services or job finding and placement services, job retention services, follow-up or extended services. Prior to the determination by MVR as to the amount of annual school funding an individual shall receive, the individual must apply for and pursue federal grant support.

MVR Policy 3.5 Mandatory Components of MVR IPE

Applied Effective Date: 12/27/02

Last Edition Date: 01/01/2000

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 361.46 **Content of the Individualized Plan for Employment.**

State Authority:

Policy Statement:

Regardless of the approach selected by an eligible individual to develop an IPE, an IPE shall, at a minimum, contain mandatory components consisting of:

1. A description of the specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the eligible individual, and, to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting;
2. Time lines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of the services and a description of the specific vocational rehabilitation services that are:
 - a. Needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assertive technology devices and assertive technology services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of such services; and
 - b. Provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the eligible individual;
 - c. A description of the entity chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, who will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, and the methods, used to procure such services;
 - d. A description of criteria to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome;
3. The terms and conditions of the IPE, including, as appropriate, information describing:
 - a. The responsibilities of MVR;

- b. The responsibilities of the eligible individual, including the responsibilities the eligible individual will assume in relation to the employment outcome; the participation of the eligible individual in paying for the costs of the plan; and the responsibility of the eligible individual with regard to applying for and securing comparable benefits and responsibilities of other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to comparable services or benefits requirements
4. For an eligible individual with the most significant disabilities for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate, information identifying:
- a. The extended services needed by the eligible individual; and
 - b. The source of extended services or, to the extent that the source of the extended services cannot be identified at the time of the development of the IPE, a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that such source will become available; and
 - c. As determined to be necessary, a statement of projected need for post-employment services.
 - d. Coordination of services for students with disabilities who are receiving special education services.

MVR Policy 3.6 Core Requirements of IPE (MVR Policy W)

Applied Effective Date: 07/28/2014

Last Edition Date: 10/01/06

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 361.45 d. **Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment.**

State Authority:

Policy Statement:

An IPE shall be a written document prepared on forms provided by MVR. An IPE shall be:

1. Agreed to, and signed by, such eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative; and
2. Approved and signed by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by MVR.
3. Timely, which means developed within 90 days of eligibility unless the individual and the counselor agree that a specific extension of the time standard is warranted (see procedure 3.7). The case record will contain rationale for the extension of the timeliness standard.

A copy of the IPE for an eligible individual shall be provided to the individual or, as appropriate, to the individual's representative, in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or, as appropriate, of the individual's representative.

MVR Policy 3.7 Ongoing IPE Services (MVR Policy X)

Applied Effective Date: 12/27/02

Last Edition Date: 01/01/2000

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 361.45, 5-7 **Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment**

State Authority:

Policy Statement:

The IPE shall be--

1. Reviewed at least annually by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor; and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative; and
2. Amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in collaboration with a representative of MVR or a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor (to the extent determined to be appropriate by the individual), if there are substantive changes in the employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, or the service providers of the services. Amendments shall not take effect until agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by MVR. Within the context of the IPE goals and objectives, when a client initiates a request for a specific service change, the counselor may initiate the change prior to the individual's signature in a case entry marked "Emergency Amendment Justification" when the following circumstances are in effect: .
 - a. The request for change is initiated by the individual;
 - b. The service is considered by the counselor to be a rehabilitation need;
 - c. The individual's rehabilitation program would be adversely impacted without the amendment and the physical signature is not feasible at the time of the request.

The consumer shall initial and date the case entry and the IPE amendment at the first opportunity.

MVR Policy 3.8 Vocational Rehabilitation Program: Adaptation of Standards

Applied Effective Date: 06/18/2007

Last Edition Date: New Policy

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 361.45, 5-7 **Development of the Individualized Plan for Employment**

State Authority: 37.30.404 Vocational Rehabilitation Program: Adaptations of Standards

The department may, within its discretion use in relation to a particular consumer adaptations of the financial need standard and other standards describing specific financial limitations adopted through these rules when the department determines:

1. one or more standards limit the consumer's access to an identified rehabilitation need in the consumers' individualized employment program;
2. there is not a commensurate service option available through the department or another program available to the consumer to address the rehabilitation need; and
3. The consumer has insufficient financial resources by which to obtain the rehabilitation need.

MVR Procedure 3.1 Substance Abuse Service Procedure

Applied Effective Date: 09/01/05

Last Edition Date: 09/01/05

For the purposes of eligibility and assessment, an individual shall not be excluded from MVR Services on the basis of his or her current illegal use of drugs, alcohol or other addictive substances if he or she is otherwise entitled to such services. The individual may be found eligible for MVR services providing the individual participate in the assessment for the specific employment outcome. MVR may suspend or terminate services offered under an Individualized Plan for Employment to any individual whose current use of substances prevents such individual from performing the duties of the employment outcome or whose employment, by reason of such current substance abuse, would constitute a direct threat to the property or safety of others.

When an individual is found eligible for services and the resulting program of services is based in part on the impediments arising from substance use or abuse, the counselor shall provide the consumer the requirements for service as part of the agency's informed choice responsibility. The statement of service responsibilities is provided for on "The MVR Statement of Service Responsibility" (Z Form 14 The MVR Statement of Service Responsibility: 08/01/05)

MVR Procedure 3.2 Utilization of Comparable Benefits and Financial Need

Applied Effective Date: 07/28/2014

Last Edition Date: 05/23/01

Supporting Policy:

2.2 Financial Need Standard

Rule Edition Date 09/01/02

2.3 Participation in the Purchase of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Rule Edition Date 12/27/02

2.4 Determination of Financial Need

Rule Edition Date 12/27/02

The Montana Financial Form serves two purposes. The first is to determine if a person has met the state financial standard. The second purpose is to determine if the individual's financial situation can add to or detract from the strategy of rehabilitation. Included in the second purpose is the calculation of the value of the comparable benefits as they contribute to the monthly expenses of the household. If an individual's monthly income (taking into account comparable benefits) exceeds their monthly expenses they must be approached to contribute the excess to the program. An individual's savings may not exceed the resource level of the MVR Financial Standard. If an individual's monthly expenses exceed their monthly income, the counselor and consumer must address the impact of that deficit before committing to a training program.

Total Monthly Household Income - Total Monthly Household Expenses equal capacity to contribute, breakeven or subsistence issue to be resolved

The resolution of subsistence issues needs to be addressed in the Rationale for Goal Selection. The rationale for proceeding with the program at least needs to problem solve the obvious impediments of not being able to afford food, shelter, and clothing for the duration of the program.

Merit scholarships may not be calculated into the monthly income for the purposes of determining financial contribution. However, MVR is not obligated to fund services for which the scholarship is designated based on the absence of rehabilitation need.

Unobligated Income and Resources

These instructions cover how staff must respond to excess income and resources. The consumer must be asked to utilize unobligated income and resources in their Individualized Plan for Employment. Income above the financial standard must be used prior to the utilization of MVR resources except when that income is specifically exempted from the financial standard

Regarding Resources

The agency is to regard resources that fall below the financial standard identified at the time of application as obligated. Resources above the financial standard must be used prior to the utilization of MVR resources except when those resources are specifically exempted from the financial standard

Regarding Financial Review

An individual's income must be determined prior to the commitment of IPE resources reviewed annually at the time of the IPE annual review.

MVR Procedure 3.3 Transitions and the IPE

Applied Effective Date: 12/23/02

Last Edition Date: 12/23/02

The Montana Vocational Rehabilitation agency will provide transition support and services to students in the process of exiting secondary school. The services shall consist of:

1. MVR will make a counselor consultant available to Montana secondary schools for purposes of providing students, teachers and parents with technical assistance as they prepare for transition. Planning and consultation will include information on the range of services available through MVR so that the student is prepared to make decisions regarding the expectation of employment based on informed consent.
2. Invitation to application at the IEP preceding the students planned exit year
3. Provide the student with the opportunity for commitment to an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to graduation or leaving school during the planned exit year.

MVR Procedure 3.4 Counselor Generated Assessment Plan

Applied Effective Date: 10/24/2006

Last Edition Date: 05/23/01

Assessment services are those services provided or purchased to answer specific diagnostic questions or discover rehabilitation need. The counselor may administer an assessment or purchase an assessment from a qualified professional. Assessments are medical examinations, psychological tests, vocational batteries, interest inventories, trial work periods, vocational evaluations and community based work assessments purchased from an enrolled work provider. A counselor may utilize traditional training services as a context for assessment only when those services meet the criteria established by this agency for an Assessment Plan.

An Assessment Plan is an assessment strategy originated by the counselor to test the feasibility of a plan in an experienced based assessment environment. To be an Assessment Plan, the following criteria must be met:

1. Traditional medical, psychological and vocational evaluations fail to establish sufficient evidence of feasibility regarding the considered rehabilitation plan.
2. The counselor and consumer can agree on criteria for IPE development prior to the initiation of the plan, and a specific end-date for the period of evaluation.
3. The assessment strategy is documented on the agency "Assessment Plan" format and evaluated in the case record in response to the evaluation dates established on the Plan.

A signed Assessment Plan extends the 90 day timeliness standard of the IPE to the end date of the signed Plan. An Assessment Plan may not exceed 90 days.

MVR Procedure 3.5 Rationale for Goal and Services

Applied Effective Date: 6/25/12

Last Edition Date: 05/23/01

Supporting Policy:

4.1 Scope of MVR Services

Rule Edition Date 12/27/02

3.3 Development of Initial Individualized Plan for Employment

Rule Edition Date 12/27/02

Every case file will have a headlined case entry entitled "Rationale for Goal and Services" that addresses each of the following considerations **prior** to signing an IPE agreement approving a vocational goal. This document will reflect the counselor's judgments regarding the consensus upon which the IPE or IPE amendment will be written

Training Points:

The decision to launch an IPE is grounded in the "Rationale for Goal and Services" document. This rationale is to precede the counselor's signature on the IPE.

The summary must include:

- 1. Client Perspective:** This should be client voice. To the degree possible direct quotes from the consumer describing their investment in this goal.
- 2. Employment Outlook:** Is this job available in the designated areas of job search? Quote findings. (www.mtcis.intocareers.org)
- 3. Goal Compatibility:** Is the job compatible with the person's abilities and aptitudes as documented or demonstrated in assessments, transcripts, and/or previous experience?
- 4. Services Rationale:** If you are providing services, how will those services contribute to the removal of impediments to employment?

Streamlining Considerations

- The Rationale for Goal and Services can reference other assessment documents in the file without repeating them. Information contained in this entry need not be repeated in the case journal.

- The case file reflects that the counselor evaluated the compatibility of the work goal with the individual's work history, informed choice, interests and impediments.
- The case file reflects **the words of the individual** in terms of personal career interests, plan strategy development, and goal selection

MVR Procedure 3.6 IPE Accountability Procedure

Applied Effective Date: 05/31/01

Last Edition Date: 05/31/01

Training Points:

The Individualized Plan for Employment contains a management agreement shared by the counselor and the MVR consumer. The counselor's responsibilities are outlined in the section of the IPE that describes the services and the conditions under which the services will be delivered. The consumer's responsibilities are outlined primarily in the sections entitled "additional community and financial resources I will use as part of this program:" and the section "my responsibilities toward my work goal." These sections are to be written as performance standards that are measurable. The standards are to be comprehensible to both consumer and counselor. It is these sections that the counselor reviews in responding to "the schedule for reviewing progress". The language below represents the contingencies by which both parties agree to abide. It is the counselor's responsibility to interrupt services in a timely fashion when the performance standards of the IPE are not met.

I understand that my failure to comply with these responsibilities will result in:

- 1) Interruption of services, 2) alternative planning or, 3) case closure

MVR Procedure 3.7 IPE Extension

Applied Effective Date: 07/28/2014

Last Edition Date: 02/24/2014

Once an individual has been determined eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation program, the VRC will work jointly with the individual, family members and/or advocates to develop the IPE. The IPE shall be completed within 90 days from the date of eligibility or earlier if feasible. In some situations (see examples below), this time period may exceed 90 days. If there is a delay of IPE development, the case file *must* contain an IPE Extension outlining the following:

1. The reason for the delay
2. The steps that will be taken to ensure IPE development
3. A goal date not to exceed 60 days
4. Counselor and supervisor signatures

Extension timelines: An IPE extension should not exceed 60 days at a maximum. If the IPE is still not completed within the second 60 day period, as with the initial extension, careful consideration should be given to identification and resolution of barriers prior to granting an additional extension. No extension should be given for more time than is realistically needed to expeditiously complete any remaining steps in the IPE development process. For example if the information needed to complete an IPE is expected to be received in 2 weeks, then a 21-28 day extension may be far more appropriate than a full 60 day extension.

Examples of valid IPE Extensions may include but are not limited to situations such as:

- Vocational counseling and guidance has not been completed: Despite efforts to guide consumer, additional time is needed for guidance and counseling to assist the individual in selecting a vocational goal or services;
- Inadequate Information: Despite prompt attempts to request records, information necessary to adequately complete the comprehensive assessment as required by CFR 361.5 (a) (6) has not been received or is not available. Additional assessment may be required;
- Individual is temporarily unavailable, through no fault of his/her own to develop his/her IPE (e.g. illness, hospitalization, relocation);
- Pending the due process decision related to the development of the IPE;

Examples of non-valid IPE extension's may include but are not limited to situations such as:

Individual has missed multiple appointments which are not disability related;

Delaying plan although goal has already been determined (e.g., requesting individual to apply for school before completing plan)

The IPE extension form must be signed by the counselor and the counselor supervisor and/or regional administrator.

MVR Procedure 3.8 Case Transfer

Applied Effective Date: 12/02/16

1. Client wants their case transferred from Office A to Office B

2. Office A Counselor notifies the Office A Supervisor that the client is moving and wants case transferred
3. Office A Supervisor e-mails Office B Supervisor with case number to let them know it's coming
4. Office A Counselor writes a Transfer Memo (see below) and mails the paper file to Office B Supervisor
Transfer Memo should read as follows: " Due to _____, this case is being transferred to Office B from Office A Counselor _____"

5. When Office B Supervisor receives paper file, assigns to Office B Counselor and does the change of counselor in MACS
6. Office B Counselor notifies client the case transfer has been complete, and proceeds with scheduling an appointment