



# 1 Open Your Case with DDS RSA

The RSA Youth in Transition Services Unit assists eligible youth and young adults with disabilities, who are attending high school, to achieve their employment goals. Consider applying for services as soon as you begin exploring your options after high school.

## Key Questions

Here are some questions you should think about as you prepare to open your case with RSA:

- Do you want to work?
- Do you have a disability that impacts your ability to work?
- How does your disability impact your everyday tasks at school and at home?
- Do you have all of your required documents or do you need help getting them?



## Your Choices

Provide consent for RSA to have access to your disability records or bring your records and paperwork to RSA. Ask RSA to help you with any missing evaluations or assessments.

## Activities

### A Apply to RSA for Services

- Pick up an application at your school or by contacting RSA directly. An RSA Transition Specialist will provide outreach information and applications to your school.
- Work with your school and parents to complete your application.
- Sign a consent form to give your school permission to share the required records and documents with RSA to determine your eligibility.

- Submit your signed application and consent form to RSA.\* Your school will help you submit these forms.

(\*If you are under age 18, your parent/guardian will need to sign the application and consent forms.)

### B Schedule Your Intake Interview

- Within 5 days of receipt of your application, RSA will assign you a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Specialist and he/she will work with your school to schedule your intake interview.
- The VR Specialist will conduct your intake interview at your school.



- If you are unavailable for an intake interview at your school, we will schedule a time for you to meet with a VR Specialist at our office. Please remember:
  - RSA will try to call you 3 times.
  - If we can not reach you, we will check back with your school about how to contact you.
  - It is your responsibility to respond so that we can schedule a time to meet.

## C Prepare Documents for Your Intake Interview

Ask your school to assist you in getting these documents. RSA staff can also help you to apply for any missing documents during your intake interview.

- Medical/Disability Report
- Social Security Card
- Government issued photo ID or a photo ID with proof of address (Driver's License, DC Resident Card, etc.)
- SSI & SSDI Verification

## D Participate in Your Intake Interview

- Check with your school to confirm when and where you will meet the VR Specialist.
- During your intake interview, you can expect the VR Specialist to:
  - Review your assessments and discuss your strengths, interests, and abilities, and the support services that you may need.
  - Explain various RSA processes and policies including the Substance Free Policy, Financial Participation, Confidentiality, Informed Choice, Ticket to Work/Benefits Counseling, and Client's Rights and Responsibilities.
- During your intake interview, you will be expected to:
  - Sign Client's Rights and Responsibilities form.
  - Provide the requested documents and information.
  - Actively participate.
- You will develop a Next Steps Sheet with your VR Specialist so that you both know what to do moving forward.

## ★★★ RSA Will Determine Your Eligibility for Services ★★★

Whenever possible, we use existing information and assessments to document the existence of your disability and determine your eligibility. You are eligible for services if you meet the following criteria:

- You have a disability that is a barrier to your employment.
- You are interested in and committed to preparing for employment.
- You will benefit from our services in order to meet your employment goal.

Your VR Specialist will determine your eligibility. This can occur:

- At the end of your intake interview if there is sufficient information.
- Within 60 days of receipt of your application if further assessment is needed.

We will notify you as soon as we make your eligibility determination. If we are unable to reach you, we will check back with your referral source about how to contact you.

If we determine you are eligible, you will work with a RSA VR Specialist to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment, detailing the supports and services you need to reach your employment goal.

If we determine you are ineligible, you may choose to appeal. The VR Specialist will provide you with information on how to appeal, including informal and formal due process procedures. The VR Specialist will also refer you to other appropriate community programs to address your training or employment-related needs.





# 2 Explore What You Want To Be

Once eligibility has been determined, you will work with a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Specialist one-on-one to explore the world of work.

## Key Questions

At this point in the process, you will gather information on jobs and your disability by exploring and answering the following questions:

- Do you want to work?
- What are your interests, skills, and abilities?
- What types of jobs interest you?
- Do these jobs match your skills?
- Are these jobs available in the place where you plan to live?
- How will your desired job impact your benefits?

## Your Choices

Your preferences and answers to these questions are important. Share your preferences with your VR Specialist and he/she can help you find answers.

## Activities

### **A Complete a Comprehensive Assessment**

- This will help us to identify your interests, skill sets, and strengths.

### **B Review Your Goals**

- It is important to review your goals from your transition plan and align them with employment goals that are consistent with your interests, skills, and abilities.

### **C Research the World of Work**

- Look up job titles, job market trends, and employers you might be interested in.

### **D Identify Job Requirements**

- For example, educational requirements, vocational training, etc.

### **E Participate in Career Exploration Activities**

- Activities may include job fairs, on-site visits to potential job sites, informational interviews, and job shadowing opportunities.



# 3 Develop Your Plan

After you have explored your skills, interests, abilities, and career options, it is time to develop your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Specialist. This plan is unique to you and details your employment goal, what you need to reach your goal, and the services you will receive from RSA. Your IPE will be developed within 90 days of eligibility.

## Key Questions

At this step in the process you will refine your employment goals and identify the services you need to achieve these goals by exploring the following questions:

- What is your employment goal?
- What skills are needed for your desired job? Do you need to go to college, a vocational training program, resumé building workshop, or an internship to build these skills?
- What types of services, including assistive technology, can help you? Who provides and pays for these services?
- What is your timeline for achieving your employment goal and how will you measure your progress?

## Your Choices

You and your VR Specialist will work together to answer these questions and write your IPE. Your VR Specialist will provide you with all the options that align with your skill-set so that you are able to make an informed choice about what you want. Decisions must be mutually agreed upon by both you and your VR Specialist.

## Activities

### **A** Write Your IPE

- Include your employment goal, which should be aligned with your interests, skills, and abilities, with available and attainable training opportunities, and with available job opportunities in the labor market.
- Identify the supports and services you need to achieve your employment goal.
- Determine who will provide the services.
- Determine the cost of services and who is responsible for paying for services.

## **B Complete a Financial Needs Assessment**

- This will outline your individual contribution.

## **C Sign Your IPE**

- Your IPE needs to be signed by you and your VR Specialist.

## **D Participate in Follow-up Meetings with Your VR Specialist to Review Your IPE**

Note: You can modify your IPE at any point in the process as long as the changes are mutually agreed upon by you and your VR Specialist.

## **Post-Secondary Education as a Service**

If you and your VR Specialists mutually decide that your employment goal will require you to attend a college or university to achieve that goal:

- You and your VR Specialist will identify the supports you will need to succeed in post-secondary education and will develop a plan for ensuring that these services are in place when you start school.
- Your VR Specialist will discuss with you the institutions that have the necessary programs or training to meet your employment goal. He or she will also provide contact information for the Student Disability Support Services Offices at the school.
- You and your VR Specialist will first consider public institutions within the metro DC area, per DC RSA's Post-Secondary Policy.
- You will exercise your informed choice on which institution to attend based on all the information you receive.

### **★★★ Cost of Services ★★★**

- You will need to complete a Financial Needs Assessment to determine your individual contribution. Depending on your ability to pay, you may have to participate in the cost of some services or equipment.
- You will need to identify any comparable benefits. This means you are required to access services that are publicly available or available through your health insurance first. (For example, Medicaid, health insurance, FAFSA, Pell Grant, VA Benefits, etc.)
- After your individual contribution and comparable benefits, RSA will assist with the remaining costs of services if they are necessary to help you reach the employment goal outlined in your IPE.



# 4 Prepare for Employment

Once you have developed your Individualized Plan for Employment with the help of your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Specialist and you have both signed it, it is time to implement your plan and receive services that will help you prepare for employment.

## Key Questions

When preparing for employment, keep the following questions in mind:

- What skill sets do you need to develop to achieve your employment goal?
- Are there career preparation activities available at your school or in the community (workshops, trainings, etc.) that could help you further refine your skills?
- Do you need any additional support to achieve your employment goal?

## Your Choices

It is up to you to participate when you receive services. Follow-up with your VR Specialist to let him/her know if something is not working or if you need additional help.

## Activities

### **A** Receive Services

- RSA will refer you for the services outlined in your IPE. These services will help you build the skill-sets and credentials needed to achieve your employment goal.

### **B** Participate in Career Preparation Activities Available at Your School and in Your Community

### **C** Follow-up with Your VR Specialist Regularly to Review Your Progress

## ★★★ Types of Services ★★★

The specific support services you receive are individualized and based upon what you need to achieve your career goals. Examples:

- Career counseling and guidance
- Assistive technology devices
- Transportation allowances
- Accommodations needed to access trainings
- Work-related training and education

RSA may provide services while you are still enrolled in high school, if it is a service that is not provided by the school but will assist you in reaching an employment goal. These types of services would take place after school hours.



# 5 Search for Jobs & Get Hired

Now you are ready for employment. The final step in this process is to search for a job and get hired.

## Key Questions

When you job search and find employment, remember to think about the following questions:

- Do you know how to use the resources available in your community to find and apply for jobs?
- Do you need help from Job Placement staff at RSA?
- Is your job consistent with what is in your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)?
- Are you satisfied with your job?
- Do you need additional help with anything to perform your job?

## Your Choices

It is up to you to search and apply for jobs, but RSA is here to provide support. Follow up with your VR Specialist if you need additional support and let him/her know how your job search is going. Ask about post-employment services if you need help in the future to maintain your job. Remember, you can reapply to RSA at any time.

## Activities

### **A** Receive Services

- RSA will refer you to the RSA Business Relations Unit or to external providers to receive services that will help you find work. The specific support services you receive are individualized and based upon what you need. Examples:
  - Job Development
  - Job Coaching
  - Job Placement

### **B** Search For Jobs

- Submit applications and resumes.
- Interview for jobs.

### **C** Update Your VR Specialist About Your Progress

### **D** Follow up and Report Your Employment to Your VR Specialist

### **E** Learn About Post-employment Services if You Need Additional Support to Maintain Your Job

## ★★★ Case Closure ★★★

RSA will consider you as having a *successful employment outcome*, close your case, and end services when:

- You have achieved an employment outcome that matches your goal and IPE.
- Your employment is consistent with your strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests, and informed choices.
- Your employment is in most integrated setting possible.
- You have been employed for at least 90 days.
- You and your VR Specialist consider the employment satisfactory.
- You are paid at or above DC minimum wage.

RSA will consider you as having an *unsuccessful employment outcome*, close your case, and end services for various reasons including:

- You are non-responsive and do not cooperate.
- You do not actively work towards achieving your employment goal.
- Your disability worsens and prevents you from working.

If RSA determines you as having an unsuccessful outcome, you do have the option to appeal.







1125 15th St. N.W., 9th floor, Washington, DC 20005 • PHONE: 202-442-8400 • TTY: 202-442-8613  
OFFICE HOURS: Monday through Friday from 8:15 am – 4:45 pm • [dds.dc.gov](http://dds.dc.gov)