




# Recognizing Abilities, Creating Opportunities: Vocational Rehabilitation

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# Agenda

- What is Vocational Rehabilitation?
- Guiding Philosophy
- Benefits of Working
- VR Referral Process
- Specialty Populations

A large Saguaro cactus stands prominently in the foreground, its two arms reaching out. The background shows a vast desert landscape with many smaller cacti and a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds. The lighting suggests a bright, sunny day.

WHAT IS  
VOCATIONAL  
REHABILITATION?

# Vocational Rehabilitation

- The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program provides a variety of services to persons with disabilities, with the ultimate goal to prepare for, enter into, or retain employment.
- The VR program is a public program funded by Federal and State monies and falls under the Arizona Department of Economic Security.
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# How does Vocational Rehabilitation help individuals with Employment?

- Based on the individual needs and informed choice, eligible individuals may receive the following types of services.
  - Vocational counseling and help in creating a job goal
  - Evaluations to determine job skills and interests
  - Assistance with training or education, if needed to obtain a job
  - Help with job interview skills
  - Special equipment or technology that is needed for the job
  - Assistance with getting to training, services, or job sites and other work-related needs



# Guiding Philosophy

Employment is viewed as a path to recovery.

The job search starts soon after an individual expresses the desire to work.

While training, support groups, and volunteer opportunities contribute to preparing an individual for the workforce and are valuable interventions, there is no better experience than actual work.

Any attempt at work, regardless of the outcome, is used as a learning opportunity and contributes to future growth and success.

# Benefits of Working



Financial Independence



Sense of purpose



Connection to the community



Social and Professional Networking



Reducing stigma



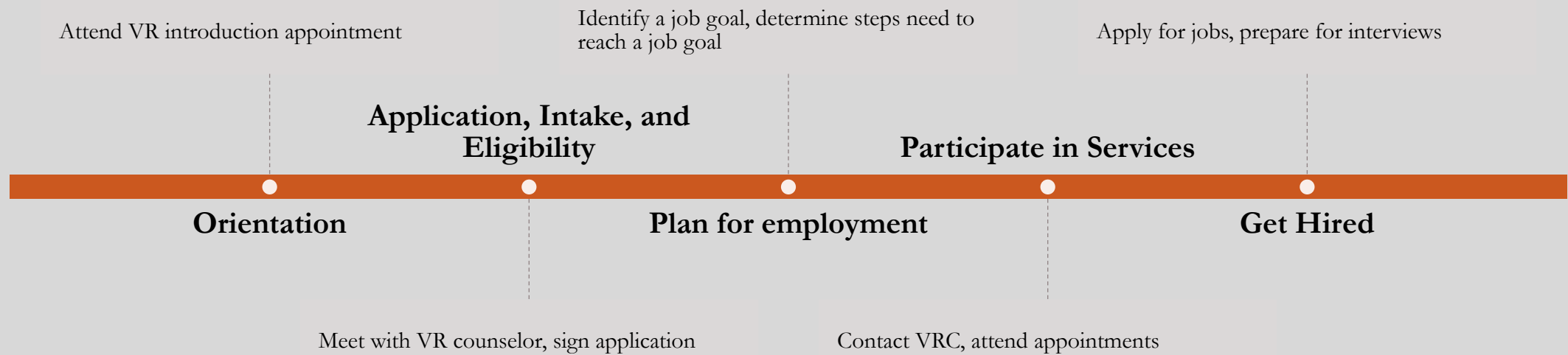
# OVERVIEW OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROCESS



# VR Referral

- At any time an individual expresses an interest in employment or preparing for employment
- Complete a referral if interested in the VR program
  - Contact a local VR office or complete the referral online.
  - Contact information for local VR offices and the online referral are available at <http://des.az.gov/rsa>
- Once a referral is completed, an orientation appointment will be scheduled.

# VR Process



# Orientation

- Orientations are available at each VR office and out in the community.
- Orientations give an overview of the VR program and an opportunity to meet with VR staff.
- If interested in applying after the orientation, documentation verifying disability and barriers to employment will be requested for the intake.

# Intake/ Application

- VR staff schedule and meet with the applicant to complete an intake.
  - Gathers information directly from the applicant (and guardian if applicable) regarding their background related to disability, educational/work history, etc.
  - Family, friends or other supporters can attend if requested by the applicant.
- VR staff review documents verifying diagnosis.

# Eligibility

- VR Counselor utilizes the information gathered from the intake interview and the documentation confirming a disability.
- To be eligible for VR, the following requirements must be met:
  - Documented disability
  - The disability is a barrier to employment
  - Require VR services for employment
  - Can benefit from VR services to achieve employment
- Eligibility is determined within 30 days for SMI and 60 days for GMH, of a signed application.

# Individualized Plan for Employment

- The IPE contains the individual's employment goal, objectives, plan of services, and responsibilities.
- VR Counselor will discuss with the client the services available to meet the identified vocational goal and disability related needs.
- The IPE must be written within 90 days of eligibility.

# Participation in VR Services

- Services will not be the same for everyone and are dependent on the specific needs of the individual.
- Any service provided must be required to address disability related barriers to employment and to achieve the employment goal.
- Some services are based on economic need.

# Employment

- Once employed, the VR Counselor will maintain contact for a minimum of 90 days.
- During this time, service needs, and job stability will be assessed for the client.
- Job stability means disability related needs have been addressed and the client has achieved the highest level of independence on the job.



# Closing of Services

- VR case closure occurs once the client obtained job stability, is satisfied with their employment and a minimum of 90 days has passed since being hired.
- Clients will be provided notification of closure before it occurs and information on services that may be available to help keep employment after case closure.

# Resources

- Arizona Rehabilitation Services/VR:
  - <http://des.az.gov/rsa>
- AZ RSA/VR office by county:
  - <https://des.az.gov/rsa-contact-information>
- Disability benefits calculator specific to Arizona (DB101):  
[www.az.db101.org/](http://www.az.db101.org/)

# Behavioral Health Coordination

- Invite the Provider's designated employment personnel and/or case manager to the IPE planning meeting(s) and/or the IPE meeting
  - Their involvement can provide crucial insight, help incorporate behavioral health objectives into the IPE, and assist with client buy-in
- Discuss the IPE development process during the Weekly Staffing and request input
  - Collaborative Protocols requirement
  - Discuss involvement w/clinic employment staff, past attempts at work, progress made, current plan, barriers, etc.
- Provide a copy of the completed IPE to the clinic
- Conduct regular meetings with the client and clinic staff on a monthly basis after the IPE has been signed



Thank you

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<http://des.az.gov/rsa>