



# **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

## **A Step-by-Step Walk-Through**



# ..... WELCOME! .....

## WHO WE ARE

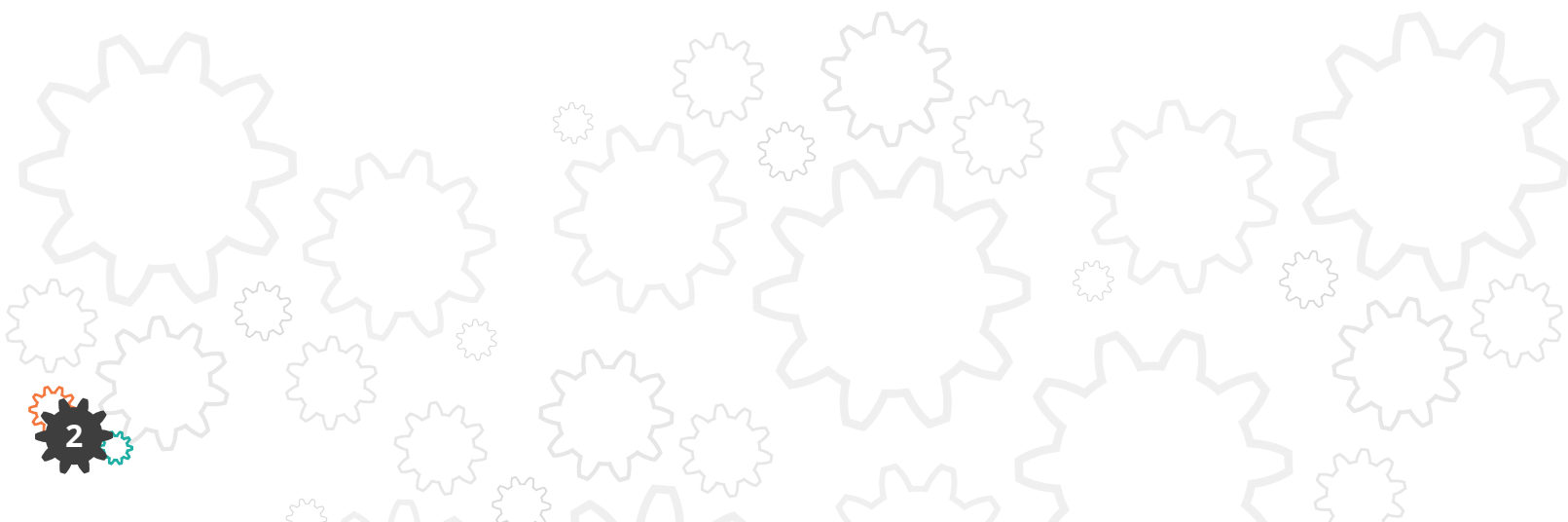
The vocational rehabilitation (VR) program within the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) works with individuals with disabilities, employers, vendors, and community partners across South Dakota to assist job seekers with disabilities obtain meaningful employment.

## OUR MISSION

To help individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, advance in, and maintain employment by providing a range of services based on their individual employment needs and goals.

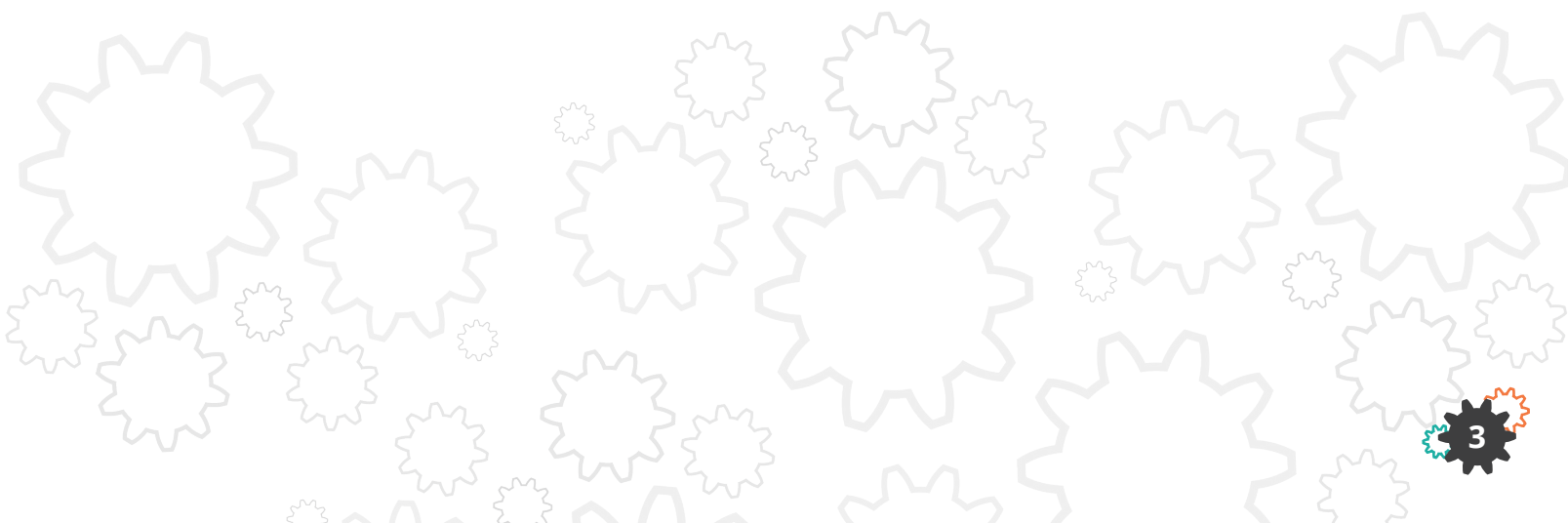
## YOUR ROLE

VR counselors work closely with you to determine a specific and individualized plan for employment and to create a fulfilling work environment. You have been provided this **Vocational Rehabilitation Guide to Employment** as a tool and resource to assist you in your employment ventures. Please keep this folder as you work with DRS as a reference throughout your experience with VR services.



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# QUALIFYING FOR ASSISTANCE

## THE CRITERIA

Interested in receiving assistance from DRS? You will need to apply for and be determined eligible for the program. To be eligible for VR services, you must...



Have a documentable disability—i.e., physical, mental, or learning



Have a disability that prevents you from effectively obtaining, doing, keeping, or advancing in a job



Need VR services in order to work successfully



### WHAT ABOUT SSDI OR SSI?

If you are eligible for social security disability insurance or supplemental security income, you are presumed eligible for VR services. Work with your VR counselor to determine if your disability meets base requirements. Trial work experiences may be arranged to determine eligibility.



# YOUR VR COUNSELOR



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

You will be assigned a senior VR counselor or a VR counselor supervised by a senior VR Counselor. Senior VR Counselors are certified by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. If your VR counselor is not available for an extended time or leaves his or her position, you will be informed and assigned a different one in order to continue receiving services. If you are not satisfied at any time during your case, you can inform your VR Counselor or his or her supervisor of your concerns.

# VR PLANNING

## THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

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### APPLICATION

- ✱ **Meet** with DRS staff—learn about eligibility requirements, programs, and services
  - ✱ **Complete** application—including required paperwork and interview
  - ✱ **Sign** releases—such as medical, psychological, and educational reports
  - ✱ **Participate** in evaluations—evaluations used to determine if you are eligible and provided at no cost to you
- 



### ELIGIBILITY

- ✱ **Await** your eligibility decision—determined within 60 days barring unique circumstances
  - ✱ **Presume** eligibility—if you are a Social Security Disability recipient and intend to work
- 



### COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

- ✱ **Complete** assessments—identify interest, aptitudes, achievements and rehab needs
  - ✱ **Assist** with the search—both labor market and career searches
  - ✱ **Work** with a VR counselor—VR Counselor will help you understand and adjust to your disability and how this impacts your goals
- 



### INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)]

- ✱ **Agree** on an employment goal—develop an IPE with your counselor within 90 days
- ✱ **Include** required services—what you need to achieve your goal, timelines and responsibilities
- ✱ **Sign** and date your IPE—once you and your VR counselor are in agreement
- ✱ **Review** IPE annually – Your IPE will be reviewed annually by you and your VR Counselor to assess progress in achieving your employment outcome

# STEP 5

## SERVICE PROVISION

- ✱ **Determine** needed services—how DRS can help you reach your outcomes
- ✱ **Select** services—choose from VR offerings provided
- ✱ **Agree** to services—consult your VR counselor on moving forward

### DRS SERVICES

We provide a variety of services to help individuals pursue competitive integrated employment goals. Services should be necessary to meet your goals, specific to your needs and at the lowest possible cost.

#### VOCATIONAL COUNSELING & GUIDANCE

Disability adjustment  
Future-planning  
IPE development

#### ACCOMMODATIONS

Assistive technology  
Worksite evaluation  
Education & self-disclosure  
Interpreter services

#### EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION & SUPPORTS

Résumé development  
Job-search assistance  
Interview prep  
Follow-along services

#### TRAINING

On-the-job training  
Coaching  
Skills training  
Post-secondary education

#### LIVING EXPENSES & TRANSPORTATION

Funds additional and necessary expenses resulting from receiving other VR services

#### TRANSITION SERVICES

Project skill-building  
Youth services

Services must be included on your IPE in order to be provided.  
DRS does not reimburse for items or services that are purchased prior to this process.

# STEP 6

## EMPLOYMENT

- ✱ **Congratulate** yourself—you have achieved your employment goal
- ✱ **Maintain** your employment – your VR case will remain open for at least 90 days
- ✱ **Close** your case—upon agreement with VR counselor that your employment is stable and your job is going well

# STEP 7

## POST-EMPLOYMENT FOLLOW-UP

- ✱ **Communicate** with your counselor—to identify ongoing employment supports
- ✱ **Provide** feedback on employment—you may be contacted after your VR case is closed on your employment
- ✱ **Access** post-employment services – if you need short-term services to help maintain your employment



# ORDER OF SELECTION

## ABOUT OUR WAITING LIST

If VR does not have sufficient financial resources to serve everyone who is eligible, a waiting list is established for all new eligible individuals. Depending on the category in which a person is classified, some individuals will be placed on a waiting list while others may proceed in developing an employment plan and receiving services.

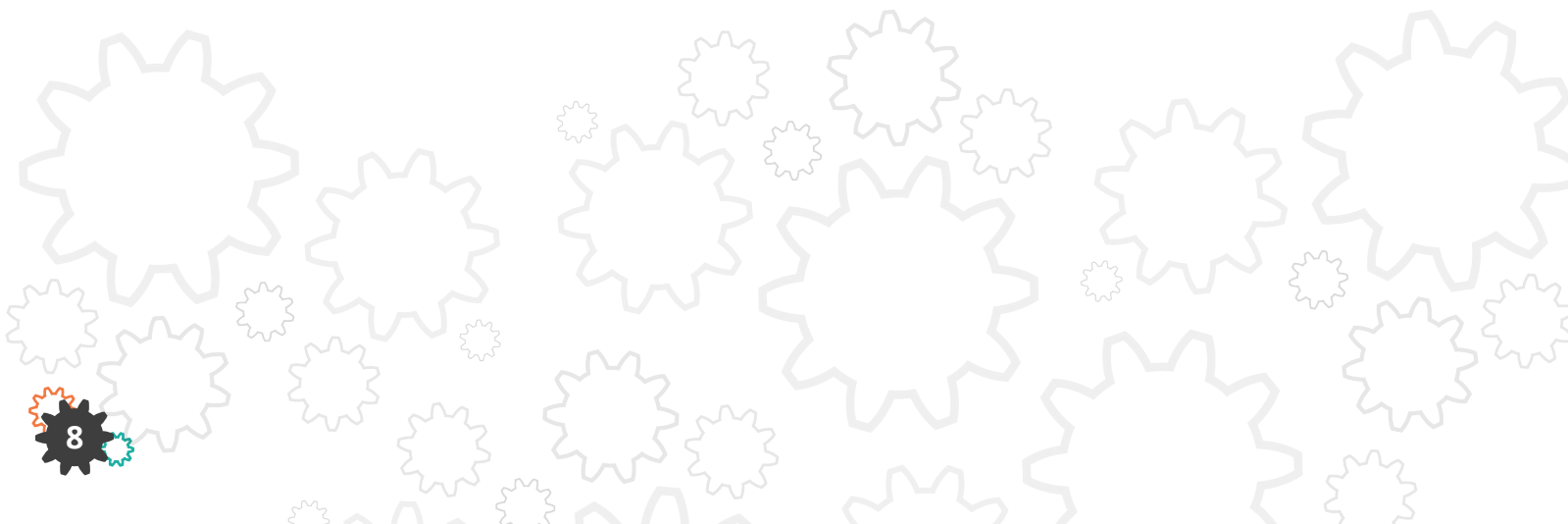
# TICKET TO WORK

## FOR SOCIAL SECURITY QUALIFIERS

Ticket to Work is a Social Security Administration (SSA) program for individuals who qualify for benefits, such as SSI or SSDI. If you are a ticketholder under this program and choose to receive services from DRS, your ticket will be considered “assigned” and “in use” and will not be available for assignment to another employment network until your case is closed.



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Contact the Beneficiary Call Center at **1-866-968-7842**, or visit  
the website at **[chooseworkttw.net](http://chooseworkttw.net)**.  
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# INFORMED CHOICE

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

**Did you know you have the right to make informed choices during your IPE development?**

Taking ownership of your IPE is vital to being successful during your VR case. You even have the right to request a review or revision of your IPE with your counselor at any time during your case. You will be making choices regarding...

<b>Your Job Goals</b>
<b>Your VR Services</b>
<b>Your Services Providers</b>

**There's no guarantee your service request will be approved.**

But you and your VR Counselor will work together to explore what options are available to you and the advantages and disadvantages of each. When making decisions, consider your...

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Priorities</b>
<b>Limitations</b>	<b>Capabilities</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Interests</b>
<b>Experiences</b>	

# FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

## KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

### You and your VR counselor will...

Research funding opportunities to pay for your requested services	Identify vendors and prices for requested services
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### DRS will...

Purchase services at the lowest possible cost that meets your needs	Follow its policy and fee schedule to determine any personal financial responsibility on your part
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### DRS-PURCHASED ITEMS & SERVICES MUST...

- ✓ **Be necessary**
- ✓ **Be appropriate**
- ✓ **Be at the lowest possible cost**
- ✓ **Allow you to fully participate in your VR program**
- ✓ **Help you reach your employment goal**
- ✓ **Be agreed to by you and your counselor**
- ✓ **Be on your IPE**
- ✓ **Be authorized in advance**



# USE OF VR SERVICES

## KNOW THE RULES

Returning, exchanging, or selling items for personal gain is not allowed. When it is necessary to return or exchange an item, contact your VR counselor first. A repossession agreement will be completed prior to the purchase of equipment. Falsifying information on your financial information can result in discontinuing of services, repayment of services, and even result in your case being closed.

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# FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

## USING FUNDS APPROPRIATELY

DRS uses public funds to provide services, so it is important that this money be used responsibly and according to DRS policy and rules. Some services can be provided regardless of your financial resources, while other services need to consider your income and financial resources. If you are receiving SSI or SSDI, you are exempt from the financial needs determination and would not need to pay for approved services.

# PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

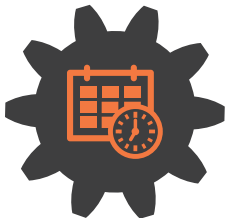
## KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The most important part of your responsibilities will start and end with your active participation. You are responsible for participating in every step of your VR program. What does this mean?



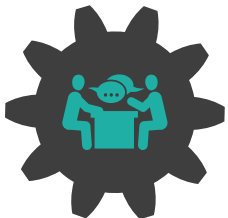
Treat everyone involved in your program  
with respect and honesty

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Be on time for scheduled appointments—  
notify your counselor to rearrange in advance

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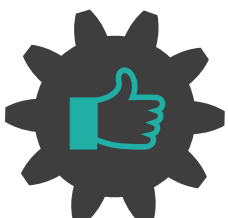
Maintain contact with your counselor and team

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Assist with obtaining records and reports  
needed to determine eligibility

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Provide honest and accurate info  
throughout your VR experience



Obtain preapproval for all VR services—and pay for services you have not been preauthorized for

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Do not engage in violent behavior, threats, or harassment

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Do not receive service through fraud, collusion, misrepresentation or criminal conduct

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Notify your counselor of changes of address, phone, or email

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Take charge of your employment search—tell your counselor when you are offered a role or have accepted one

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Provide education and employment info when asked—as late as two years after the closing of your case

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Provide income documents or verification for alternate assistance source applications

# APPEALING DECISIONS

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to make informed choices regarding your employment goal, objectives, services, and service providers. Your VR counselor can assist you to make these important decisions.

**You may appeal any decision concerning the provision or denial of VR services.**

Feel free to discuss these concerns with your VR counselor or his or her supervisor. You have the option of requesting an informal administrative review or a fair hearing to resolve your concerns. You may also request mediation services through a trained mediator instead of or as part of the appeals procedures.

**You can exercise any of these options by sending a written request within 30 days from the receipt of eligibility determination, case closure, or denial of services to:**

DRS Assistant Director  
Hillsvieview Plaza  
3800 E Highway 34  
c/o 500 E Capitol Ave  
Pierre, SD 57501-5070



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Contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP) if you need information or help to resolve any issue or concern. You can contact CAP at **605-224-8294** or toll-free at **800-658-4782**.

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# YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY

## YOUR CASE FILE

When you apply for VR services, DRS will create a case file for your records. With your signed release, we will obtain various types of information for purposes directly related to your VR program. This information will be kept confidential in accordance with federal laws and regulations. The information you provide is voluntary to the extent that withholding information does not interfere with the determination of eligibility or the development of your IPE.

## YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

When you apply for VR services, you will be approving the exchange of information with cooperating departments in state government, the Social Security Administration, local school districts, and other agencies involved in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. DRS will share your information if a court orders us to release it or if there is a law-enforcement investigation. Information may also be shared to protect you or others if it is determined that you pose a threat to your own safety or the safety of others. Outside of these circumstances, DRS will not share your medical or personal information without your written permission.

## YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

If you communicate electronically (i.e., email or text) with your VR counselor or other DRS staff, this information will become part of your case file and be kept confidential. While this is an acceptable and effective mode of communication, sensitive or private subjects may be best discussed in person or by phone. Additionally, information available to the public, such as newspapers, websites, and other forms of public social media, may become part of your case file.

**DRS will keep your case file for six years after your service record is closed. After that time, all contents of your paper case file will be destroyed.**

# WHERE WE'RE LOCATED

## OUR OFFICES

### ABERDEEN

1707 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE, Ste. A, 57401-5050  
Phone/TTY 605.626.2398 or 800.439.3417

### BROOKINGS

1310 Main Ave. S., Ste. 102, 57006-384  
Phone/TTY 605.688.4280 or 800.382.2176

### CHAMBERLAIN (YANKTON SUB OFFICE)

320 Sorenson Dr., Ste. 102, 57325-1022  
Phone/TTY 605.734.4445 or 800.265.9677

### HURON (BROOKINGS SUB OFFICE)

2361 Dakota Ave. S., 57350-4334  
Phone/TTY 605.353.7130 or 800.382.2176

### MITCHELL (YANKTON SUB OFFICE)

1321 N. Main St., 57301-1354  
Phone/TTY 605.995.8072 or 800.265.9677

### PIERRE (ABERDEEN SUB OFFICE)

912 E. Sioux Ave., 57501-5070  
Phone/TTY 605.773.3318 or 877.873.8500

### RAPID CITY

2330 N. Maple Ave., Ste. 2, 57701-1196  
Phone/TTY 605.394.2261 or 800.439.8861

### SIOUX FALLS

811 E. 10<sup>th</sup> St., Dept. 21, 57103-1650  
Phone/TTY 605.367.5330 or 800.265.9679

### SPEARFISH (RAPID CITY SUB OFFICE)

1300 N. Ave., 57783-1525  
Phone/TTY 605.642.6815 or 800.439.8861

### WATERTOWN (BROOKINGS SUB OFFICE)

2001 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW, Ste. 200, 57201-4029  
Phone/TTY 605.882.5150 or 866.261.9261

### YANKTON

3113 Spruce St., Ste. 128, 57078-5320  
Phone/TTY 605.668.3050 or 800.265.9677

### STATE OFFICE

3400 E Hwy 34, c/o 500 E Capitol Ave, 57501-5070  
Phone/TTY 605.773.3195 or 800.265.9684