



## **MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION**

### Vocational Rehabilitation Services Overview

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MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation Program assists individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program helps individuals with physical, psychiatric and/or learning disabilities face the challenges of the modern workplace. This may include identifying job goals based on individual interests and aptitudes, providing funds for college and vocational training, assessing worksite accommodations, educating an employer about the Americans With Disabilities Act, or assisting an individual returning to work after adjusting to a new disabling condition. Vocational rehabilitation services can often reduce or remove barriers to employment. Priority is given to those individuals who have the most severe disabilities in areas such as communication, mobility, work tolerance and work skills.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is mandated and regulated by the federal government while being administered through state government. Find out more information about the VR Program's federal parent agency, the [Rehabilitation Services Administration](#). Below is information from the RSA website.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, authorizes the allocation of Federal funds on a formula basis of State and Federal dollars for the administration and operation of a vocational rehabilitation (VR) program to assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for and engaging in gainful employment. The VR program provides a wide range of services and job training to people with disabilities who want to work. At present, the VR system has more than one million eligible individuals, two-thirds of them are severely disabled. Priority is given to people with the most severe disabilities.

To be eligible for VR services from a State VR agency, a person must have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment; be able to benefit from VR services in terms of employment; and require VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment.

The State VR agencies assist persons with disabilities to locate employment by developing and maintaining close relationships with local businesses. Furthermore, they assist persons served to become taxpaying citizens and to reduce their reliance on entitlement programs.

According to a 1994 Harris poll, there are approximately 43 million Americans with disabilities. Approximately 66 percent of those individuals of working age are unemployed, whereas, only 20 percent of non-disabled persons are

unemployed. According to the poll, 60 percent of those who rate their impairments as "slight" are working, but only 8 percent of those with "very severe" disabilities are working.

To help the population of unemployed persons with disabilities join the workforce, State VR agencies must provide comprehensive rehabilitation services that go way beyond those found in routine job training programs. This frequently includes work evaluation and adjustment services; assessment for and provision of assistive technology, such as customized computer interfaces for persons with physical or sensory disabilities; job counseling services, and medical and therapeutic services.

The first VR Act was signed into law on June 20, 1920. Since then, the program has continually been authorized and expended with bipartisan support, having demonstrated a constant and impressive record of effectiveness.

Specifically: Nine million persons with disabilities have been assisted in acquiring employment. Each recent year, more than 200,000 persons with disabilities enter or return to the labor market or become self-employed; and approximately 77 percent of the persons who achieve an employment outcome each year report that their own income is their primary source of support (as opposed to entitlement or through personal relationships).

## Overview of the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Process

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### Getting Acquainted

- MRC VR staff will outline available vocational rehabilitation services when you attend a group orientation or schedule an individual appointment. To inquire about an orientation at the VR office nearest you, click on the [office locator](#).
- If you are interested in receiving services, a professional vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor will be assigned to meet with you and assist you in obtaining a job.
- During the initial interview, you and your VR counselor will have the opportunity to discuss your employment interests, concerns and vocational goals.

### Eligibility

Eligibility Information is gathered from:

- Physicians
- Therapists
- Hospital and other medical records
- Self report
- Social Security Administration

Eligibility Determination is made by:

- Identifying substantial barriers to employment caused by a disability.

- Establishing a reasonable expectation that a positive employment outcome will occur as a result of VR services.

### **Making Informed Choices**

Your Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed cooperatively by you and your counselor and may include the following:

- Personal Goals
- Career Interests Survey
- Work History
- Education
- Trial Work Experience
- Labor Market Research

After gathering relevant information, you and your counselor decide on a realistic, time limited vocational plan and map it out on paper.

Read more information about [informed choice](#).

### **Job Searching**

The following are examples of typical resources available at VR offices during your job search:

- Resume Preparation
- Job Seeking Skills Training
- Electronic Job Hunting
- Interview Skills Training
- Job Leads
- Job Placement Assistance

### **Post-Employment Services**

- MRC's VR Program will provide you with support, advocacy and follow-up services for at least 90 days after you secure employment.
- You may be eligible to receive post-employment services for up to three years after you are placed in a job and your case is closed.

## Quincy MRC OFFICE

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275 Hancock Street  
Quincy, MA 02171  
Tel. (617) 471-1600  
TTY (617) 471-5059  
Fax (617) 770-1893

We assist individuals of all disabilities to go to work. If you are unemployed or underemployed, you may be able to benefit from vocational services. All VR consumers must reside in Massachusetts and be eligible to work in the United States. The Quincy MRC Office serves individuals who reside in the following towns: **Braintree, Cohasset, Hingham, Hull, Milton, Norwell, Norwood, Quincy, Randolph, Scituate, Walpole and Weymouth.**

**The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Unit serves Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals not only from the above towns but the Boston area as well, including: Back Bay, Beacon Hill, Charlestown, Chelsea, Dorchester, Downtown, E. Boston, Kenmore Square, North End, Revere, S. Boston, South End, West End, and Winthrop.**

### **To Make a Referral**

Any individual with a disability can inquire about obtaining services. Friends, relatives and health care providers can also refer an individual to MRC. Our services are designed to assist individuals with disabilities to make informed choices about work. We have two easy ways you can start this process.

- **Call (617) 471-1600** and speak to our receptionist. **TTY (617) 471-5059** for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.
- **Walk In** to our office Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 am and 5:30 pm.

### **Special Services**

#### **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services**

- **Counseling and advocacy services** for dealing with issues facing Deaf and Hard of Hearing people on the job or in training.
- **Sign Language Interpreting Services.**
- **Reasonable Accommodation** services such as special devices for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people on the job or in training.

## Available Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

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Following is a list of many (but not all) of the VR services MRC provides. Since every person is unique and will have different goals or needs, individuals will not necessarily receive all of the following services, but will receive those services appropriate to their individual situation.

- Diagnostic Evaluations
  - Interest and Aptitude Testing
  - College or Vocational Training
  - Job Placement Assistance
  - Counseling and Guidance
  - Supported Work
  - Skills Training
  - Job Coaches and Tutors
  - Vehicle Modifications
  - Housing Modifications
  - Assistive and/or Rehabilitation Technology
  - Programs for Individuals Turning 22 (Ch. 688)
  - Consultation to Employers
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