

3-21-18

**To: Employment First stakeholders**

**From: VR Director Trina M. Lee, ODDS Director Lilia Teninty, and Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator**

**Re: [Employment First](#): VR and Order of Selection**

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

[Like Us](#) on Facebook!

Recently there has been conversation about whether Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) might go into Order of Selection in 2018. This message is intended to clear up any confusion and address the current situation.

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requires a state vocational rehabilitation services agency to implement an order of selection when VR does not have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals. Annually, Oregon VR must certify to federal funders that VR has resources to meet expected participant needs in the next federal fiscal year.

Currently, it appears that VR will need additional funding to avoid invoking the order in October 2018. There are three reasons VR might need to invoke the order: money, staff, and services/vendors/contractors. However, there are variables that can impact that decision, including:

- Amounts of expenditures being spent on current caseloads, staff, etc,
- Whether VR receives re-allotment dollars from RSA, and the amount received,
- The amount of Social Security reimbursement.

In the 2017-19 biennium, VR applied for re-allotment dollars from RSA and this additional money allowed VR to get through the biennium without invoking the order. VR plans to apply for re-allotment dollars in summer 2018 and expects to find out in August or September if those dollars are awarded, and if so, how much.

In 2017, VR completed contingency planning to be prepared if the order of selection must be invoked. A specific process must be followed when a decision to invoke is made by the VR Director:

- RSA must be notified.
- The State Rehabilitation Council must be officially notified.
- Public hearings and notifications must be held for the people we serve.
- Other DHS programs and the Governor's office must be notified.

- An implementation plan must be determined and followed to officially invoke the order.
- When in the order of selection, a state must prioritize services to individuals with the most significant disabilities first.
- Staff and vendors will need to be trained on Order of Selection rules and procedures and the process to follow.

If VR goes into Order of Selection, we will notify all staff and stakeholders about the implementation plan. If the Order is invoked, ODDS will respond with timely information to make sure that employment services continue to be available for those in DD services. We likely will not know until this summer at the earliest, depending on when we hear about re-allotment funds.

We will continue to communicate as more information is available.

~ Trina, Lilia and Acacia