

Vocational Rehabilitation and COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

May 20, 2020

Note: Many questions have been answered in the FAQ for Employment First. We want to ensure we can keep answers updated so we don't plan to repeat them here.

If you don't find what you're looking for, please check the [Employment First FAQ](#). If you still have questions, [please let us know](#) so we can get your questions answered.

VR referrals and intakes

Question: How does someone apply for VR Services during the Executive Order “stay at home”?

Answer: Please call your local [VR Branch Office](#) to set an appointment for a virtual intake and orientation appointment. If you cannot access virtual communications, please let your counselor know so they can work with you on a solution.

VR plans and services

Question: How does someone get into a VR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that is already eligible for VR services during the “stay at home” Executive Order?

Answer: VR staff has been provided a number of tools to work remotely and maintain connection during this time and are continuing to adapt to clients needs. Development of IPEs have not changed at this time.

Question: What is the best way for contracted Job Developer/Job Coach agency to get new authorizations (AFPs) for job coaching from VR?

Answer: Job Developers/Job Coaches should reach out to the [local office](#) to discuss options related to specific clients.

Question: How can I access virtual assignments and meetings if I don't have a computer? Will VR provide laptops for my access to services if I am not working? If I am in school?

Answer: Please work with your VR counselor. Each person's situation is different. Your counselor will want to help you find a solution for the support you need.

Question: How are Youth Transition and Pre-employment transition services operating?

Answer: Pre-ETS can still be requested. Since Pre-ETS are individualized, an initial virtual, online or phone meeting can be held to learn what a student needs, and if it is possible to provide such Pre-ETS virtually. The Pre-ETS team has many online resources available and is gaining more with assistance from partners. [Please contact Pre-ETS.](#)

Question: Will the summer work programs still be offered?

Answer: The safety of students who participate in our summer youth programs is our number one priority. To support the health of our community, Vocational Rehabilitation will not hold any in-person youth services in summer 2020. This was a hard decision, in part because in-person programs are a valuable experience for youth. Some contractors will be able to provide online services, so if you are involved in a summer program, please contact that contractor.

The Request for Applications (RFA) 4708 Summer Work application is still open for future summers. Any program that would like to apply should contact C.J. Webb at Carolyn.Webb@dhsosha.state.or.us.

Question: I am in career exploration. How can I continue to move forward?

Answer: VR services are always tailored to each individual's needs. Please contact your VR counselor to plan a path forward. VR staff are working remotely and are available to help you continue to move forward.

If you are working with a job developer or other contractor on career exploration, please contact that organization. We know that some job developer organizations have put services on hold. If that's true for the

organization you work with, be sure to let your VR counselor know so together you can develop alternatives.

Job development and job coaching

Question: What kinds of services can job developers offer through virtual meetings?

Answer: Many Job Developers across the country are finding new and innovative ways to provide services virtually, from training videos to mock interviews. Job development services are important, and when that is an appropriate service for a client, we want to make sure it continues. Please consult with the VR branch office you are working with to explore how your agency may use its skills remotely and how that can be funded by VR to meet the client's needs.

Question: If essential jobs are available and VR clients want to work, can I support the client in obtaining and coaching the client in these settings?

Answer: Yes, with informed consent by all parties and with the availability of other needed resources. Any service must comply with the social/physical distancing requirements outlined in Governor Brown's Stay Home, Save Lives Executive Order.

Contractor funding

Question: Will VR have funding assistance for contracted job developers/job coaches or special project (funding) to ramp up services when the EO "stay at home" order is lifted?

Answer : We have been in national calls with RSA and other states. RSA has been clear VR is not able to pay for services that are not rendered. However, we are continuing conversations around this and we are exploring different ways to support employment service providers.

Do you have a question that isn't answered here or in the [Employment First FAQs](#)? [Please let us know](#) so we can get your questions answered.