

6.00 INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)

Principle Regarding Consumer Involvement in the IPE Process

Consistent with the intent of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, vocational rehabilitation services are to be provided in accordance with the following principle:

Individuals with disabilities must be active participants in their own rehabilitation programs, including making meaningful and informed choices about the selection of their vocational goals and objectives and the vocational services they receive.

Description of the IPE

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is a written plan outlining an individual's vocational goal, and the services to be provided to reach the goal.

The IPE formalizes the planning process through which the vocational goal, service delivery and time frames for service delivery are determined. The IPE identifies the individual's employment objective, consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities and provides a plan for monitoring progress toward achievement of the goal.

Through the IPE, individuals are informed of their rights and responsibilities in the rehabilitation process.

The individual's involvement in developing the plan is reflected throughout the IPE. Consistent with the principle stated above, the IPE must be jointly developed, agreed upon and signed by the consumer and the counselor.

IPE Consumer Handouts

Two informational handouts regarding the IPE have been developed to provide information and assistance to consumers during the VR process.

What You Need to Know About the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) provides general information about the IPE. It is included in the VR Handbook and should be discussed with the consumer during the intake process.

Deciding where I need help... is to be shared with consumers who are beginning to develop their IPE. This handout contains a series of questions to be answered by the

consumer. The questions will help the consumer to evaluate whether they are knowledgeable about their employment goal; the steps they need to take and the services they need to achieve their goal. Completing this handout is optional but should be encouraged, particularly with consumers who are unsure of what job they are interested in pursuing.

Time Frame for Developing an IPE

1. An IPE will be developed with every individual who is eligible for services as soon as possible but no later than 120 days after they have been determined eligible for VR services.
2. For high school students, the IPE will be developed by the time the student graduates from high school.

Developing the IPE

The following general principles must be applied as the IPE is developed.

Joint Development - The IPE and its amendments must be jointly developed, agreed upon and signed by the NYSCB counselor and the consumer (or, when appropriate, the consumer's authorized representative). In most circumstances, the IPE will be developed during a face-to-face meeting between the counselor and consumer. When this is not possible, for example, in a job save situation, the IPE can be developed without a face-to-face meeting. The reason for not having a face-to-face meeting must be documented in the case record. If the consumer has a representative, the representative should also participate in developing the IPE.

Use of Interpreters - For consumers who communicate through sign language, a certified interpreter must be present while the IPE is being developed with the consumer. This procedure should be followed regardless of the counselor's signing skills, unless the counselor is a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (Manual Communication). Counselors in this title are required to demonstrate a level of proficiency in manual sign language which will allow them to perform the job satisfactorily. During the development of the IPE, the counselor should stop frequently to check for the consumer's understanding and confirm that understanding through the interpreter.

For individuals who do not speak English, NYSCB can provide a foreign language interpreter to enable the consumer to meaningfully participate in the development of their IPE. In some situations, a family member or friend can assist the consumer in this process however, this may not always be the most appropriate option

Basis for the IPE - The IPE must be based on an assessment carried out in the most individualized and integrated setting, consistent with the informed choice of the individual.

Informing Consumers of Alternative Options - The counselor should discuss the various options available to the consumer throughout the process of developing the IPE. This enables the consumer to make decisions about their rehabilitation plan based upon information about available options regarding the employment goals, services, service providers and the methods used to provide or procure services.

Annual Review - The IPE must be reviewed with the consumer (or his/her representative) at least annually. Amendments resulting from the annual review may not take effect until agreed to and signed by the consumer.

Accessible Language and Format - A copy of the IPE and its amendments must be provided to the consumer or, as appropriate, the consumer's authorized representative. The IPE should be provided, to the extent possible, in the consumer's preferred format (including large print, Braille, cassette tape or email), or to the extent possible, in the native language of the consumer or as appropriate, the consumer's authorized representative. A copy of the completed signature page should be attached to the IPE in the consumer's ECF.

Contents of the IPE

The IPE contains the following:

1. The employment goal
2. Objectives associated with achievement of the goal
3. Consumer and counselor responsibilities
4. The specific rehabilitation services to be provided.
5. The service providers and the process used to provide or procure services.
6. The projected dates for initiation of the services and the anticipated duration of each service.
7. Criteria to be used to determine progress toward achieving the employment goal.
8. The terms and conditions under which goods and services will be provided in the most integrated setting.
9. The individual's rights and responsibilities including the right to an initial review, mediation, administrative review or administrative hearing.
10. A description of the availability of the local Client Assistance Program.

11. An assessment of the anticipated need for post-employment services.
12. A listing of comparable benefits available to the individual or the individual's family that may be used to offset the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.
13. If appropriate, information regarding the individual's need for rehabilitation technology, specific on-the-job services and related personal assistance services.

Preparing an IPE

Follow this procedure to complete the IPE.

1. Select the IPE from the list of available forms in the consumer's ECF.
2. Select the appropriate Type of Plan from the pick list.
3. Select the appropriate goal from the pick list containing the O-net database of job titles

Guidance for Selecting an Employment Goal

When selecting a goal, the consumer and counselor should consider many factors including but not limited to:

- a. Availability of employment
- b. Occupational requirements
- c. Medical factors
- d. The consumer's previous work history, interests, abilities and capabilities and willingness to relocate.

The selection of the goal should be based on an assessment of vocational rehabilitation needs including, where appropriate, situational assessments. See Chapter 3.00 for additional information regarding assessing the nature and scope of services.

The employment goal for an individual must be based, primarily, on the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities (e.g. primary employment factors). The employment goal also must reflect the individual's interest and informed choice to the extent that those factors are consistent with the individual's primary employment factors (i.e. strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities). Factors such as the local economy or local labor market conditions (e.g. job availability in the community) are external factors that may be considered, but cannot alone determine whether the employment goal is appropriate. These considerations apply to employment goals for both eligible individuals who are not currently employed and eligible individuals who are seeking to advance in their present careers.

4. Enter the objectives, **specific services, the service providers, the start and end dates for each service, the consumers responsibilities associated with participation in each service, NYSCB's responsibilities and the way the consumer's success will be measured.** Counseling and Guidance provided by NYSCB is preprinted on the IPE form. The dates of service, measurement of success and my responsibilities boxes will need to be completed. CIS includes pick lists for the consumer and counselor responsibilities and for progress evaluation criteria. Counselors can enter their own text or select from the pick lists.
5. Review **Your Responsibilities** with the consumer.
6. Review the **NYSCB Counselor Responsibilities** with the consumer.
7. Review the **Consumer's Rights** regarding confidentiality, the availability of the appeals process and the Client Assistance Program with the consumer. Confirmation of this discussion should be noted in a case note in the consumer's ECF.
8. Review the statement regarding the availability of **Future Services** (post-employment services).
9. Review the **Signatures section** with the consumer and obtain his/her signature. (See page 6.00.07 – Consumer's Signature on the IPE), explaining that the IPE is not finalized until it is approved and signed by the NYSCB senior counselor. If the IPE includes graduate school training and/or a home modification, the counselor should explain that the IPE must also be approved and signed by the NYSCB district manager.

Note: Counselors who have completed the IPE electronically who don't have access to a printer won't be able to obtain the consumer's signature on a print copy at the time the IPE is developed. The consumer's signature should be obtained using the process outlined in Step 15.

10. Enter the anticipated date of the **annual IPE review**.
11. **Sign and date** the IPE. This triggers an email notification to the counselor's supervisor letting them know an IPE is ready to be signed. When the supervisor signs the IPE an email notification is sent to the counselor. The counselor can now enter the consumer signature date if the consumer has agreed to the IPE.
12. Send a copy of the signed IPE to the consumer. Follow procedure "a" when the supervisory review does not result in changes to the IPE. Follow procedure "b" when changes are made to the IPE as a result of a supervisory review
 - a. Send the IPE, along with a cover letter explaining that the enclosed IPE

contains the information you and the consumer agreed to and that the consumer should contact you if he/she wants to make any changes. Both the IPE and the cover letter should be sent in the consumer's preferred format.

- b. If a supervisory review results in changes needing to be made to the IPE, contact the consumer to discuss the changes. If the consumer is in agreement with the changes, send the IPE to the consumer in his/her format along with a cover letter explaining that the changes you and the consumer agreed to make have been incorporated into the IPE.—Every effort should be made to obtain the consumer's signature on the IPE. The counselor should bring a copy of the IPE signed by the counselor and supervisor(s) to their next meeting with the consumer and obtain the consumer's signature at that time.
13. Indicate the date that the IPE was given or sent to the consumer and note the format in which it was provided in the record of service.
 14. Scan and attach the signature page to the consumer's IPE in CIS.

Consumer's Signature on the IPE

The Rehabilitation Act specifically states that the IPE is to be jointly agreed upon and signed by the consumer (or authorized representative) and the counselor. If the consumer refuses to sign the IPE and disagrees with the IPE, no viable plan is in effect. The reasons for the refusal should be discussed with the consumer and documented either on the IPE or in a case note. The counselor and consumer should attempt to resolve the issue(s) and redevelop the plan.

If the issue(s) cannot be resolved and the consumer and counselor cannot agree upon an IPE, the counselor should advise the consumer of his/her right to exercise the appeals process and of the availability of assistance through the Client Assistance Program (CAP). If no resolution is possible, the counselor should advise the consumer that his/her case will be closed.

Ending an IPE

As soon as an individual receiving services under an approved IPE chooses to pursue a different vocational goal, the existing IPE will cease to be in effect. If a new IPE can be developed within 30 days, the individual's case can remain in Status 18. If the process of developing a new IPE is expected to take longer than 30 days, the case should be moved to Status 24. Only those services that are required to develop a new IPE should be provided during this time.

In both instances, a letter confirming that the initial IPE is no longer in effect should be

sent to the consumer within 10 days. In addition, a case note should be written outlining the steps to be taken to develop a new IPE.

If the consumer requests an appeal of the decision to end the IPE, pending a final determination of the review (unless the consumer and reviewer otherwise agree) services currently being provided cannot be suspended, reduced or terminated except where the services have been obtained through misrepresentation, fraud, collusion, or criminal conduct by the consumer or the consumer's representative, or continuation of services would result in a violation of Federal and/or State law or regulations. See VR Manual Appeals Process page 1.04.04 - Continuity of Services for further information.

Annual IPE Reviews

The IPE can be reviewed as often as determined necessary; however, it must be reviewed at least annually. During the annual review, the consumer and the counselor review the entire IPE and jointly redevelop the IPE as needed.

The annual review is to be conducted during a face-to-face meeting between the counselor and the consumer. When this is not possible, the annual review can take place without a face-to-face meeting. The reason for not having a face-to-face meeting must be documented in the case record. If the consumer has a representative, the representative should also attend the annual IPE review meeting.

If an unscheduled review of the entire IPE takes place prior to the date of the scheduled annual review, the next annual review can be set for one year from the date the unscheduled review took place.

Documenting the Annual Review

The annual review of the IPE should be documented in the ECF and should be identified as the IPE Annual Review.

If during the annual review there is no longer agreement on an IPE, see instructions on "Ending an IPE" on page 6.00.07.

IPE Revisions and Amendments.

A **revision** to the IPE involves a change that does not substantially change the original plan. Examples of revisions are:

- Change in the service provider
- Change in the dates of service
- Changes in the projected date of completion of the goal

- Addition or deletion of a minor service such as transportation or reader services

An **amendment** to the IPE is a change that substantially affects the IPE. Examples of amendments are:

- Addition or deletion of a major service such as home modification services or self-employment
- Change in the IPE goal

Amendments to the IPE are triggered in CIS when one of the services noted above is added to the IPE or when the IPE goal is changed. Amended IPEs must be signed by the counselor, supervisor and the consumer prior to implementation of the changes.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is a written plan which describes your employment goal and the steps you will take to achieve your goal.

Your IPE will be developed on a form provided by CBVH. Before your plan can begin, it needs to be reviewed and approved by your CBVH counselor.

When is an IPE developed?

An IPE is developed after you are found to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

Who can help me develop an IPE?

There are several options for getting help developing your IPE. These are:

- A professionally trained vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by CBVH can help you to choose an employment goal and can assist you in developing all or part of your IPE. The CBVH counselor will also assist you in completing the IPE form.
- You can get help from any resource you can identify, such as:
 - a relative or friend,
 - an organization or agency that helps people with disabilities
 - staff at a one-stop employment center
 - a school teacher or a counselor
 - a representative of the Client Assistance Program
- You can work on developing your IPE on your own

What information needs to be included in your IPE?

- your employment goal - the job you plan to have when you have finished your training

- the services you will need to reach your employment goal and how long it will take to finish services and reach your goal.
- who will provide the services you need
- the way progress toward your goal will be measured
- the length of time it will take you to achieve your goal
- the costs of the services and who will pay for them
- your responsibilities in carrying out your plan

What services can CBVH provide?

CBVH will provide services that are required for you to reach your employment goal. CBVH will always provide counseling and guidance as you develop your IPE and while you are receiving services. Most people also receive placement services (services designed to help you with your job search) either while they are receiving training or after their training is completed.

While CBVH can pay for most services, there are some services that cannot be paid for if your income is above a specified level. Your CBVH counselor will give you more information about this. If services that are based on your ability to pay are listed on your IPE, you will need to provide your CBVH counselor with financial information in

order to determine who will pay for those services.

Can my IPE change after it is approved by CBVH?

You and your CBVH counselor will review your plan each year. Your plan can also be revised at other times during the year. Any change must be approved by you and your CBVH counselor. Please keep your counselor informed of any changes in your life that may affect your IPE.

What if CBVH does not approve my IPE

It is possible that your CBVH counselor and you may disagree about your IPE. If you have a disagreement that you cannot resolve with your counselor, the first step is to discuss the issue with the district office senior counselor. If that is not helpful, you can discuss the issue with the district manager and/or regional coordinator.

If after these discussions, your IPE is not approved, you can appeal the decision. There are several appeal options available. Ask your counselor for information on the different options and on how to request an appeal.

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is an independent program that can help you as you try to resolve your disagreement with CBVH. Contact information for your local CAP is listed in the Handbook for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Deciding where I need help...

<u>Employment Goal</u> <u>help</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No, I will need</u>
I have an idea of the type of job I would like to find.....	_____	_____
I have spoken with someone, who is doing this job.....	_____	_____
I have spoken with someone who is visually impaired who is doing this job.....	_____	_____
I know the job duties that are usually required for this job.....	_____	_____
I know whether I will need special services because of my disability.....	_____	_____
I know how jobs in this field are typically filled.....	_____	_____
I know that the average salary for this type of job will be adequate for my needs.....	_____	_____
I know when I would like to		

begin working..... _____

Steps to Reach My Employment Goal

Yes

No, I will need help

I know what skills I have that will help me succeed in this job..... _____

I know the educational and training requirements of the job... _____

I know the steps I need to take to reach my employment goal.. _____

I have concerns in my life that will need to be addressed before I can go to work (for example, transportation, child care, benefits)..... _____

Services

I know what services I will need to reach my employment goal (for example, counseling, job training, education, daily living skills training, travel training)... _____

I know who will be able to provide the services I need..... _____

I know about other benefits
I have or can apply for to
help pay for the services.....
