

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.

Description of the Individualized Plan for Employment Development Plan (IPEDP)

The Individualized Plan for Employment Development Plan (IPEDP) is developed using the IPE form. It is to be used with high school students who are in Status 10 and with other individuals when a vocational goal has not yet been determined. The IPEDP will include all services to be provided for the consumer during the vocational exploration process, prior to the development of an IPE. See Section 7.00 Overview: Transition Planning and Services for further information about the use of the IPEDP for high school students.

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) (pages 6.01.01 – 6.01.04) provides general information about the IPE. It is included in the intake packet and should be discussed with the consumer during the intake process.

Deciding where I need help... (pages 6.01.05 – 6.01.06) 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 IPEDP and IPE

An IPE or an IPEDP will be developed with every individual who is eligible for services as soon as possible but no later than 90 days after they have been determined eligible for VR services or for post-employment services.

For individuals who have developed an IPEDP within 90 days of eligibility, an IPE must be developed as soon as possible but no later than one year after they have been determined eligible for VR services.

For high school students, the IPE will be developed by the time the student graduates from high school.

An IPE to determine eligibility will be developed within 60 days of an individual's application for services when the individual's case is placed in extended evaluation because there isn't sufficient information to determine eligibility for VR services.

When an individual in extended evaluation status is determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, a new IPE with an employment goal must be developed to replace the IPE that was developed to determine eligibility.

Developing the IPE or the IPEDP

The following general principles must be applied as the IPE is developed. Where appropriate, these same principles should be applied to the development of the IPEDP:

Joint Development - The IPE and its amendments must be jointly developed, agreed

upon and signed by the CBVH 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, CBVH 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. Revisions or 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, computer disk or email), or to the extent possible, in the native language of the consumer or as appropriate, the consumer's authorized representative. A signed print copy of the IPE and its amendments must be maintained in the consumer's record of service.

Homemaker IPE

The IPE development process for individuals with a homemaker goal (served through the Adaptive Living Program, ALP#3) differs from the process for individuals with an employment goal. Counselors should refer to the Comprehensive Services Contract Manual for information regarding the IPE development process for individuals receiving services through ALP #3.

Contents of the IPE

The IPE contains the following:

1. the employment goal
2. the specific rehabilitation services to be provided.
3. the service providers and the process used to provide or procure services.
4. the projected dates for initiation of the services and the anticipated duration of each service.
5. criteria to be used to determine progress toward achieving the employment goal.
6. the terms and conditions under which goods and services will be provided in the most integrated setting.
7. the individual's rights and responsibilities including the right to an initial review, mediation, administrative review or administrative hearing.
8. a description of the availability of the local Client Assistance Program.
9. an assessment of the anticipated need for post-employment services.
10. 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.
11. if appropriate, information regarding the individual's need for rehabilitation technology, specific on-the-job services and related personal assistance services.

The IPE Forms

There is one official CBVH IPE that has been created as a large print hand entry form, a large print electronic form and a Braille/Email form.

Please note that the Client Assistance Program (CAP) contact information needs to be entered on each IPE at the end of Section III of the pre-printed language.

The forms are:

Large Print Hand Entry Form - This is a large print IPE form with large boxes that is used to handwrite an IPE when the counselor is meeting with the consumer in person to develop an IPE. The information is then entered onto the Large Print Electronic IPE Form described below. The use of this version is optional as some staff, particularly those using laptops and/or access technology may prefer to develop the IPE using the Large Print Electronic form.

Hand Entry Extra Boxes – This is a one-page addendum form containing extra service boxes. It is to be used to enter additional services beyond those allowed for on the Hand Entry form. It can also be used to revise the IPE when the only changes are to the services section of the IPE. When used to revise the IPE, this form needs to be signed by the consumer and appropriate CBVH staff.

Large Print Electronic IPE Form - This form is to be completed electronically and will automatically print in large print. If a Hand Entry form has been completed, the information from the Hand Entry form should be data entered into this Large Print Electronic Form. The counselor and appropriate supervisory staff should sign this form prior to sending it to the consumer. This form is located in the IPE folder of the CBVH public folders in Outlook.

Electronic Extra Boxes - This is a one-page form containing additional service boxes. It is to be used to enter additional services (numbered six-ten) beyond the five boxes allowed for on the Large Print Electronic IPE Form. It can also be used to revise the IPE when the only changes are to the services section of the IPE. When used to revise the IPE, this form needs to be signed by the consumer and appropriate CBVH staff. This form is located in the IPE folder of the CBVH public folders in Outlook.

Braille/Email Form - This form is to be completed electronically and is to be used when the consumer will need a Braille IPE or when the IPE will be sent to the consumer through email. When making an IPE revision to the Braille IPE, an entire new IPE form will need to be written. Unlike the Electronic IPE form, which has boxes to select the different service outcomes or results (e.g. completed, not completed), these results need to be typed onto this form. This form is located in the IPE folder of the CBVH public folders in Outlook.

A **Using the IPE Forms Instruction Sheet** is included in the IPE folder of the CBVH public folders in Outlook. The instruction sheet provides information on printing, saving and using these forms.

Preparing an IPE

Follow this procedure to complete the IPE. As noted above, in most situations, the counselor will be completing the IPE in a face-to-face meeting with the consumer using

the Large Print Hand Entry Form and if needed, the Hand Entry Extra Boxes Form. Counselors who prefer to prepare the IPE electronically can do so using either the LP IPE Electronic Entry Form or the Braille/Email Form (if the consumer wants a Braille or email copy of the IPE).

1. Enter the **individual's name** and **case #**.
2. Check the appropriate box indicating either a new IPE or an **amended IPE**.
3. Check the appropriate box indicating whether the plan is an:
 - **IPE - My Plan to Find Work**
 - **IPEDP - My Plan to Develop an IPE**
 - **IPE for Post-Employment Services or,**
 - **IPE for Extended Evaluation**

For an IPE - My Plan to Find Work - Enter the employment goal, being as specific as possible. Also enter the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) General Occupational Category or a more specific DOT code if known. Also enter the expected date of achievement.

The DOT General Occupational Categories are:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 0/1 | Professional, Technical, and Managerial Occupations |
| 2 | Clerical and Sales Occupations |
| 3 | Service Occupations |
| 4 | Agricultural, Fishery, Forestry, and Related Occupations |
| 5 | Processing Occupations |
| 6 | Machine Trades Occupations |
| 7 | Benchwork Occupations |
| 8 | Structural Work Occupations |
| 9 | Miscellaneous Occupations |

For an IPEDP - My Plan to Develop an IPE, enter a tentative employment goal and the expected date of achievement.

For an IPE for Post-Employment Services -My Plan to Maintain My Job, enter the job the consumer is seeking to maintain, including the appropriate DOT or RSA code.

4. Enter the **specific services, the service providers, the start and end dates for each service, the consumers responsibilities associated with participation in each service and the way the consumer's success will be measured**. Counseling and Guidance provided by CBVH is preprinted on the IPE form. The dates of service, measurement of success and my responsibilities boxes will need to be completed.

Consumer responsibilities could include:

- Your goal of psychologist cannot be fully achieved through the provision of services listed on this IPE. It is understood that after two years of successful achievement in college we will renegotiate this IPE to include graduate school training.
- You are responsible for budgeting your maintenance allowance to meet your daily living expenses.

5. **Measures of success** may include: obtain GED diploma, graduate from college in the specified timeframe, ability to use adaptive computer software.
6. Review **Your Responsibilities** with the consumer.
7. Review the **CBVH Counselor Responsibilities** with the consumer.
8. 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 record of service
9. Review the statement regarding the availability of **Future Services** (post-employment services).
10. Review the **Signatures section** with the consumer and obtain his/her signature. (See page 6.00.06 - Consumer's Signature on the IPE), explaining that the IPE is not finalized until it is approved and signed by the CBVH 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 CBVH 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.

11. Enter the anticipated date of the **annual IPE review**.
12. **Sign and date** the IPE.
13. Data enter the information from the Hand Entry IPE onto the either the Large Print or Braille/Email IPE Electronic Entry Form, using the Electronic Extra Box Form if needed to enter additional services. Bypass this step if the IPE was completed electronically.
14. Submit the IPE for supervisory review and signature. (This applies to IPEs for all

consumers except those with a goal of homemaker).

15. 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 the 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. Retain the original paper copy with the consumer's signature along with the computer copy signed by the counselor and supervisory staff in the record of service.
 - b. If the 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. Retain the original paper copy (with a notation that the IPE has been not approved) along with a copy of the IPE that has been signed by the counselor and supervisory staff and sent to the consumer, in the record of service.

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.

16. 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.

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 return to Status 10. 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.

Selecting an Employment Goal

The IPE is a plan to enable the consumer to achieve employment, consistent with his/her unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities. When selecting a goal, the consumer and counselor should consider many factors including but not limited to:

1. availability of employment
2. occupational requirements
3. medical factors
4. 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.

Recognizing that there are times when a consumer may not be able to identify a specific employment goal early in the vocational rehabilitation process, it is acceptable for a more general goal to be entered on the IPEDP or IPE until a more specific goal is selected. The goal must at least identify a general occupational category (see page 6.00.06) and cannot be written as “competitive employment”. The IPE goal should become more specific as the consumer proceeds through the vocational rehabilitation process.

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 following information applies to the annual reviews:

- 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.
- For individuals in extended evaluation, IPE reviews must be conducted at least every 90 days.
- 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.

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

Minor IPE revisions that take place between annual reviews or during the annual review should be incorporated into the IPE during the annual review. This can be done using the extra boxes form and must include appropriate signatures.

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 college training or adaptive equipment.
- change in the IPE goal

Amendments to the IPE require completion of an amended IPE. The steps for completing an IPE (pages 6.00.06 – 6.00.09) should be followed when completing an amended IPE.

Documenting the Annual Review

The annual review of the IPE should be documented as a case note in the record of services and should be identified as the annual review in the margin.

A summary of the annual review should be sent to the consumer in their preferred medium, if problems were identified during the annual review.

Implementation of Changes to the IPE Resulting from the Annual IPE Review, New and Amended IPEs

Changes to the IPE cannot take effect until agreed to and signed by the consumer or his/her representative.

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.....
