



## Vocational Rehabilitation Services Skill Development Training; Vocational Evaluation; Work adjustment; Job Development and Placement; Supported Employment; and Work Services

### DEFINITION

Vocational Rehabilitation services provide individualized coordination of counseling, career planning, training, support services, and job placement appropriate to the employment and life goals of persons with disabilities.

*Note: Please see Self-Paced\_Training: Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VOC) in the Tools Index for additional assistance with this standard.*

*Research Note: Traditional vocational rehabilitation services are widely used to provide vocational services to people with disabilities. However, unlike supported employment programs, there is a lack of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness. More research needs to be done to examine the outcomes of programs with extensive pre-placement training and sheltered vocational placements.*

**PURPOSE:** *Individuals with disabilities who receive vocational rehabilitation services achieve increased community integration, social inclusion, and self-determination through the realization of their vocational goals.*



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## VOC 1: ACCESS TO SERVICES

The organization minimizes barriers to the initiation of needed services through community education and a variety of culturally, geographically, and age appropriate outreach strategies.

### VOC 1.01

The organization uses an array of outreach strategies to inform the community about the services it provides and how to access them.

*Interpretation: Appropriate outreach can include posters, pamphlets, public service announcements, communication with those who come into contact with the target population, and outreach to other providers. Strategies should include attention to geographic location, language of choice, age, sexual orientation, developmental level, and religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural background.*

### VOC 1.02

The organization educates employers in the community about the possibilities for, and benefits of, employing people with disabilities.

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## VOC 2: SCREENING

The organization screens applicants promptly and responsively to identify need efficiently and to direct individuals to appropriate services.

### VOC 2.01

Individuals are screened and informed about:

- a. how well the individual's request matches the organization's services; and
- b. what services will be available and when.

*NA: Another organization is responsible for screening applicants.*

### VOC 2.02

Prompt, responsive screening practices:

- a. ensure equitable treatment;
- b. support timely initiation of services; and
- c. provide for placement on a waiting list, if desired.

*NA: Another organization is responsible for screening.*

### VOC 2.03

Individuals who cannot be served, or cannot be served promptly, are referred or connected to appropriate resources.

*NA: The organization: (1) accepts all clients, or (2) only receives clients by referral, and is required by contract to accept all referrals.*

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## VOC 3: VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Service recipients participate in the development of an individualized, strengths-based, culturally responsive vocational assessment that helps the individual to establish realistic training and vocational expectations.

*Note: All organizations are expected to work with the individual to complete a vocational assessment that informs the vocational plan, regardless of the vocational rehabilitation services they provide.*

### VOC 3.01

The vocational assessment should identify the individual's disability and include:

- a. vocational interests, preferences, and goals;
- b. vocational history, experience, and training;
- c. skills and aptitudes;
- d. the need for accommodations or assistive technology;
- e. level of functioning and relevant health, social, and behavioral factors;
- f. the need for support services;
- g. available community resources; and
- h. individual strengths and resources.

*Interpretation: Workplace accommodations might include accessible parking, public transportation stops close to the program site, elevators, reduced work hours or more frequent breaks, specially designed work stations, or office supply needs such as enlarged print, special lighting, or TDD.*

*Note: Refer to the Assessment Matrix for additional Comprehensive Basic Assessment criteria. The elements of the matrix can be tailored according to the needs of specific individuals or service design.*

*Research Note: Research shows that, despite the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), adults with disabilities who report a need for accommodations are still less likely to work than adults with disabilities who do not need accommodations. Therefore, recognizing accommodation needs during the initial assessment is an important part of developing an effective vocational plan that will minimize such barriers to placement.*

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### **VOC 3.02**

Personnel who conduct vocational assessments are qualified by training, skill, and experience and able to recognize service recipients with special needs.

### **VOC 3.03**

The information gathered for vocational assessments is comprehensive, directed at concerns identified in initial screenings, and limited to material pertinent for meeting service requests and objectives.

### **VOC 3.04**

Vocational assessments are conducted in a culturally responsive manner to identify resources that can increase service participation and support the achievement of agreed upon goals.

*Interpretation: Culturally responsive vocational assessments can include attention to geographic location, language of choice, and the person's religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural background. Other important factors that contribute to a responsive assessment include attention to age and sexual orientation.*

### **VOC 3.05**

Vocational assessments are completed within timeframes established by the organization and are updated periodically.



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## VOC 4: VOCATIONAL PLANNING AND MONITORING

Each individual participates in the development and ongoing review of an individualized vocational plan that is based on his or her goals and preferences and is the foundation for delivery of appropriate services and support.

*Interpretation: If the individual is receiving services from any of the organization's other programs, the vocational plan may be part of the overall service plan.*

### VOC 4.01

The vocational plan is developed within an appropriate timeframe and with the full participation of the service recipient.

*Interpretation: Vocational planning is conducted so that the service recipient retains as much personal responsibility and self-determination as possible and desired. Individuals with limited ability in making independent choices can receive help with making, or learning to make, decisions. When the service recipient is a minor, or an adult under the care of a guardian, the organization should follow applicable state laws or regulations requiring involvement or consent of legal guardians.*

### VOC 4.02

The vocational plan is based on the assessment, and includes:

- a. agreed upon goals, desired outcomes, and timeframes for achieving them;
- b. barriers to employment and methods for minimizing their impact;
- c. services and supports to be provided, and by whom; and
- d. the service recipient's signature.

*Interpretation: The organization recognizes that a continuum of services is needed to meet the vocational goals of service recipients and offers a full array of employment and vocational services, directly or by referral.*

### VOC 4.03

During vocational planning the organization explains:

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- a. available options;
- b. how the organization can support the achievement of desired vocational outcomes; and
- c. the benefits, alternatives, and risks or consequences of planned services.

#### VOC 4.04

The organization documents in the case record that it has advised the individual about how paid employment may affect eligibility for disability and other benefits and documents efforts made to ensure the individual understands explanations.

#### VOC 4.05

The vocational plan identifies, as appropriate:

- a. the individual's vocational goals and preferences;
- b. support services to engage or maintain employment; and
- c. the individual's informal social network.

#### VOC 4.06

To ensure that services are coordinated and comprehensive, the organization establishes collaborative arrangements with community service providers, whenever possible, given its geographic, administrative, and budgetary constraints.

*Interpretation: Methods that the organization can use to facilitate regular contact among partnering service providers include:*

- a. virtual networking;
- b. email/phone;
- c. co-location;
- d. satellite locations or roving vans; and
- e. referral or formal contracting.

#### VOC 4.07

The direct service provider and a supervisor, or a clinical, service, or peer team, review the vocational plan quarterly to assess:

- a. implementation;
- b. progress toward achieving agreed upon vocational goals and desired outcomes; and
- c. the continuing appropriateness of the goals.

*Interpretation: Experienced direct service providers may conduct reviews of their own cases. In such cases, the direct service provider's supervisor evaluates a sample of the provider's reviews as per the requirements of the standard.*



*Interpretation: Timeframes for vocational plan review should be adjusted depending upon the issues and needs of the individual and the frequency and intensity of services provided.*

#### **VOC 4.08**

The direct service provider, the service recipient, and/or a legal guardian regularly review progress toward achievement of agreed upon vocational goals and sign revisions to the vocational plan.

#### **VOC 4.09**

The service recipient invites family members, significant others, employers, or other involved advocates to participate in case conferences and to be advised of ongoing progress as desired.

*Interpretation: The organization facilitates the participation of involved parties by, for example, helping arrange transportation, or including them in scheduling decisions.*



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### VOC 5: SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

The program is guided by a service philosophy that:

- a. sets forth a logical approach for how program activities and interventions will meet the needs of service recipients;
- b. guides the development and implementation of program activities and services based on the best available evidence of service effectiveness; and
- c. prohibits the exploitation of service recipients.

*Interpretation: Exploitation can include excessive work hours, poor working conditions, or inappropriate compensation. Service recipients should be treated in compliance with all applicable legal requirements and in the same manner as any other employee of a similar work environment.*

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## VOC 6: SKILL-DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

The organization helps service recipients develop the skills needed to fulfill their employment goals by designing training programs with input from community employers.

*NA: The organization does not provide skill-development training services.*

### VOC 6.01

Skill training is tailored to meet each individual's employment objectives, and courses are modified, as necessary, in response to employment trends and community labor market conditions.

### VOC 6.02

Skill-development training addresses:

- a. job search skills;
- b. job expectations;
- c. job maintenance skills;
- d. time management;
- e. money management; and
- f. other work practices, such as payroll deductions, union dues, and insurance.

### VOC 6.03

Training schedules are flexible including evening hours and, when possible, distance learning opportunities and individually paced instruction.

*Interpretation: Individually paced instruction is typically offered through a computer-based program that allows students to skip quickly over material they are familiar with or to move slowly through material that is more difficult. It is often more effective to provide this type of instruction in a classroom-style setting where a teacher or trainer is available if the student has questions.*

### VOC 6.04

Each skill-development training course:

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- a. is reviewed every two years with input from local businesses; and
- b. provides a written course description including the curriculum, location, and meeting time of training sessions.

#### **VOC 6.05**

Service recipients are offered skill-development training courses in integrated settings, either directly or by referral, as appropriate to their individualized employment objectives.



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### VOC 7: VOCATIONAL EVALUATION SERVICES

The organization provides the service recipient with a written vocational evaluation that highlights the individual's skills, aptitudes, preferences, abilities, and special needs.

*NA: The organization does not provide vocational evaluation services.*

#### VOC 7.01

The organization builds on the vocational assessment, combining it with other relevant information including medical, psychological, social, cultural, educational and financial data, to develop a real or simulated work experience that:

- a. identifies strengths and areas in need of improvement;
- b. evaluates learning styles; and
- c. provides an opportunity for the individual to explore vocational options.

#### VOC 7.02

The organization evaluates work-related behaviors by observing the individual's ability to work as a member of a team and his or her work habits, such as dependability, punctuality, attention to detail, initiative, and perseverance.

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### VOC 8: WORK ADJUSTMENT SERVICES

The organization provides supervised employment opportunities to assist the individual in progressing towards the attainment of basic work skills, attitudes, and habits.

*NA: The organization does not provide work adjustment services.*

#### VOC 8.01

The service recipient participates in the development of an individualized, written work adjustment plan that specifies:

- a. measurable objectives and specific outcomes;
- b. the work environment in which the individual is likely to succeed; and
- c. personnel responsible for helping the individual to achieve the goals of the plan.

#### VOC 8.02

Work adjustment services include supervised employment experiences that provide opportunities to learn:

- a. skills that require manual dexterity;
- b. psychomotor skills;
- c. skills necessary to find and keep a job; and
- d. interpersonal and communication skills.

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## VOC 9: JOB DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

The organization helps the job seeker find and retain employment appropriate to their vocational objectives and provides assistance to employers of individuals who may require special accommodations.

*NA: The organization does not provide job development and placement services.*

### VOC 9.01

The vocational plan includes an appropriate timeframe for achieving individual job placement goals and is closely monitored by the treatment team.

### VOC 9.02

Job development and placement services involve local employers who can demonstrate opportunities for career advancement.

### VOC 9.03

The organization provides the individual with up-to-date information about the local job market, consistent with his or her interests and abilities, and:

- a. an assessment of work readiness;
- b. assistance in developing a job search strategy; and
- c. interview and negotiation techniques.

### VOC 9.04

The organization provides post-employment follow-up services to improve job retention by:

- a. regularly assessing the appropriateness of the placement;
- b. providing ongoing evaluation of employee satisfaction;
- c. offering long-term support services, as necessary, to the service recipient; and
- d. exploring opportunities for career development and advancement.

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### VOC 9.05

The organization documents in the case record:

- a. information about the individual's job;
- b. relevant information about the employer;
- c. initial follow-up within three months of job placement; and
- d. post-employment contacts.

*Interpretation: Details about the placement to be included in the case record will vary based on the requirements of applicable contracts or local laws and can include information such as the supervisor's name, date of hire, or salary.*

### VOC 9.06

The organization establishes and maintains relationships with employers, and services to employers include:

- a. education about disabilities, job accommodations, and how individuals with disabilities can become employable;
- b. assistance with developing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities;
- c. identification of and elimination of physical and attitudinal employment barriers; and
- d. on-site job analysis.



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## VOC 10: SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The organization facilitates the integration of persons with severe disabilities into the competitive labor market through on-site training, real-world work environments, and ongoing support services.

*Research Note: Empirical research indicates that supported employment programs achieve positive employment outcomes including higher pay, more work hours, and higher rates of competitive employment. This is particularly true when looking at short-term rates of competitive employment. Studies by several federal, state, and private entities have endorsed supported employment as an effective evidence-based method of achieving competitive employment.*

*NA: The organization does not provide supported employment services.*

### VOC 10.01

The organization works with the individual to secure a job placement that is tailored to his or her special needs, including job sharing, or other individualized employment arrangements.

*Interpretation: Other individualized employment arrangements may include micro business opportunities.*

### VOC 10.02

Personnel provide ongoing support and direct supervision to the individual, both on and off the job site, as indicated in the vocational plan.

### VOC 10.03

The organization supports individuals to function as full members of the work community by offering training to use public transportation and coordination to engage in everyday social activities with co-workers.

### VOC 10.04

Job placement and ongoing support promote opportunities for job

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expansion and promotion, as indicated in the vocational plan.



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## VOC 11: WORK SERVICES

The organization provides a structured work environment, training program, and financial compensation, to maintain the individual's level of functioning or to facilitate movement toward community employment.

*NA: The organization does not provide work services.*

### VOC 11.01

Work assignments take into account any special needs, including the need for accommodation

### VOC 11.02

The organization prepares and distributes a handbook to service recipients that meets the written and oral communication needs of clients and addresses:

- a. work conditions, compensation practices, and fringe benefits;
- b. workplace rules and regulations;
- c. grievance and appeal procedures; and
- d. the process service recipients follow to achieve community employment.

### VOC 11.03

The organization develops a system for evaluating the employee's work performance and progress toward competitive employment.

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## VOC 12: CASE CLOSING

Case closing is a planned, orderly process.

### VOC 12.01

Planning for case closing:

- a. is a clearly defined process that includes assignment of staff responsibility;
- b. begins at intake; and
- c. involves the worker, service recipients, family members or a legal guardian, and others, as appropriate.

### VOC 12.02

Upon case closing, the organization notifies any collaborating service providers, including the courts, as appropriate.

### VOC 12.03

When an individual's third-party benefits or payments end, the organization determines its responsibility to provide services until appropriate arrangements are made and, if termination or withdrawal of service is probable due to non-payment, the organization works with the individual or family to identify other service options.

*Interpretation: The organization must determine on a case-by-case basis its responsibility to continue providing services to individuals whose third-party benefits have ended and who are in critical situations.*

*NA: The organization does not receive third-party benefits or payments for service.*

### VOC 12.04

If an individual is asked to leave the program, the organization makes every effort to link the person with appropriate services.

### VOC 12.05

The organization that has a contract with a public authority that does

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not include aftercare planning or follow-up:

- a. conducts a formal case closing evaluation and assessment of unmet needs; and
- b. informs the public body of the findings, in writing, as appropriate to the contract and with the permission of the individual or a legal guardian.

*NA: The organization does not have a relevant contract with a public authority.*



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### VOC 13: AFTERCARE

Whenever the need for aftercare is identified, the service provider and person receiving services work together to develop an aftercare plan, and follow-up occurs when possible and appropriate.

*Interpretation: While the decision to develop an aftercare plan is based on the wishes of the service recipient, unless after care is mandated, the organization is expected to be strongly proactive with respect to aftercare planning.*

*NA: The organization has a contract with a public authority that prohibits or does not include aftercare planning or follow-up.*

#### VOC 13.01

An aftercare plan is developed sufficiently in advance of case closing to ensure an orderly transition.

#### VOC 13.02

An aftercare plan identifies support services needed or desired to help maintain vocational accomplishments and specifies steps for obtaining these services.

#### VOC 13.03

The organization takes the initiative to explore suitable resources and make contact with service providers when appropriate.

#### VOC 13.04

The organization follows up on the aftercare plan when possible and with the permission of the service recipient.

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## VOC 14: PERSONNEL

Program personnel have the education, training, experience, and skills needed to help individuals achieve their vocational goals.

### VOC 14.01

Employee workloads support the achievement of client outcomes, are regularly reviewed, and are based on an assessment of the following:

- a. the qualifications, competencies, and experience of the worker, including level of supervision needed;
- b. the work and time required to accomplish assigned tasks and job responsibilities; and
- c. service volume, accounting for assessed level of needs of new and current clients.

### VOC 14.02

Direct service personnel have the appropriate combination of formal education, pre-service training, and supervised experience to provide effective vocational placements and support services.

Related TS 1, TS 2

### VOC 14.03

Direct service personnel demonstrate competency in, or receive pre-service training on:

- a. ensuring consumer health and safety;
- b. special needs of the identified service population;
- c. psychiatric rehabilitation issues;
- d. crisis intervention;
- e. the use, management, and side effects of psychotropic medications;
- f. mental health and substance use conditions; and
- g. relapse prevention.

Related TS 1, TS 2

### VOC 14.04

Supervisors are qualified by:

- a. an advanced degree in social work or a comparable human service

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- field from an accredited institution;
- b. an advanced degree from a program in vocational rehabilitation or vocational counseling;
  - c. a bachelor's degree in a human service field and two years experience in the vocational rehabilitation field; and/or
  - d. national or state certification, licensing, or registration requirements in the vocational rehabilitation field.

Related TS 3

#### **VOC 14.05**

A supervisor is available to provide case consultation at all times services are provided.