

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

What Schools Need to Know about VR

What is the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and how will it help my student?

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a federally and state funded employment program within the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). The program is dedicated to assisting people with disabilities to become fully productive members of society by achieving independence and meaningful employment. VR helps students with disabilities successfully transition from school to work. VR professionals work together to develop activities and experiences designed to support students in realizing the necessary experiences, skills and knowledge to reach their post-secondary goals.

Who will be working with my student?

VR professionals bring vocational rehabilitation expertise to a person-centered planning team that includes the student, parents and/or legal guardians, the school and other community-based agencies from which the student is eligible for services. They work with students and their team to ensure coordination of services, identify appropriate employment goals, obtain work incentives counseling if necessary, and provide information about current labor market trends, in-demand jobs and other career-focused information.

What services can VR provide to my student?

VR is mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to make available no-cost Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities beginning at age 14 in the 9th grade up to age 22. These services are intended to help students with disabilities get an early start in identifying career interests. VR works in collaboration with schools and other community partners to provide Pre-ETS. These services may be provided individually or in groups by VR professionals or VR providers. They may take place during or after school hours or in the summer depending on the activity, duration, availability of the student and coordination with partners. The services include the following:

- Job Exploration Counseling to discuss career options and learn about in-demand jobs;
- Work-based Learning Experience to gain knowledge about the workplace;
- Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education to explore training options available after graduation;
- Workplace Readiness Training to improve social and independent living skills;
- Instruction in Self-advocacy to learn skills needed for greater independence.

Who qualifies as a student with a disability?

A student with a disability is an individual who is in a recognized education program, is at least 14 years of age and in the 9th grade, but not yet 22, and is eligible for and receiving special education or related services under IDEA or is an individual with a disability for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehab Act. One or more Pre-ETS can be provided to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services or have been determined eligible and who have an identified need for Pre-ETS.

What if my student needs additional services?

A potentially eligible student may apply for VR services at any time; however, formal application is not required to receive Pre-ETS. If a potentially eligible student requires more individualized VR services (e.g. job development, job coaching, transportation for participation in services) they would need to apply for VR services, be found eligible, and work with a VR professional to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

How does my student begin receiving services?

A Transition Parental Permission Form needs to be signed by the parent, guardian or representative with a copy of the Individualized Education Plan, 504 or other disability documentation returned to the local VR Office. For a list of offices and the Transition Parental Permission form please go to www.gvs.ga.gov or www.gadoe.org.

Why does my student not receive the same services as another student? They both have disabilities.

VR provides individualized services based upon the needs of each client. As no two cases are alike, VR may provide a specific service to one student, but not to another. In addition to client, needs, services are also provided based upon client choice, individual circumstances, available funds, and desired outcome. VR services are funded based upon the unique needs and economic circumstances of the individual, availability of funds and VR policies.

How do the LEA's work with VR?

VR Leadership attends monthly Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) meetings attended by regional Special Education Directors. This is an opportunity for VR to inform SPED Directors about referrals, services, and other information relevant to student success. Each VR office develops a unique relationship with their schools to receive referrals to provide Pre-ETS and Transition services and assist the student with a disability in reaching post-secondary training opportunities.