

# OVR – OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES



[Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Awards \\$1.35 Million in Innovation and Expansion Project Contracts](#)

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, or OVR, provides vocational rehabilitation services to help persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain, or maintain employment. OVR provides services to eligible individuals with disabilities, both directly and through a network of approved vendors. Services are provided on an individualized basis. The OVR counselor, during face-to-face interviews, assists customers in selecting their choice of vocational goals, services and service providers. An Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed, outlining a vocational objective, services, providers and responsibilities. Certain services are subject to a Financial Needs Test (FNT) and may require financial participation by the customer. Counseling and guidance, diagnostic services, assessments, information and referral, job development and placement, and personal services such as readers or sign language interpreters are provided at no cost to the individual. Also, by law OVR customers receiving Social Security benefits for their disability (SSI, SSDI) are exempt from OVR's Financial Needs Test.

Statewide there are 21 District Offices staffed with trained, professional Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors which serve Pennsylvania in all 67 counties. The Hiram G. Andrews Center in Johnstown provides vocational training and comprehensive rehabilitation services to people from across the state. OVR's Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services also provides specialized services to blind and visually impaired individuals. These services are designed to increase an individual's independence and employability. OVR's central administrative offices in Harrisburg provide technical assistance to local district offices in order to improve service delivery.

## TYPES OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

OVR provides a wide range of services to eligible applicants. Some services can help you overcome or lessen your disability; others can directly help you prepare for a career. The services you receive will be arranged to meet your individual needs. Not everyone will need every service. OVR services include:

**Diagnostic Services:** Medical, psychological, and audiological examinations and tests used to better understand your disability and your needs for specific types of services.

**Vocational Evaluation:** Aptitude, interest, general ability, academic exams, work tolerance, and "hands-on" job experience used to understand your vocational potential.

**Counseling:** Vocational counseling will help you to better understand your potential, to rely on your abilities, to set realistic vocational goals, to change them when necessary, to develop successful work habits, and to begin a satisfying career. Counseling is available throughout your rehabilitation program.

**Training:** Education to prepare you for a job including, but not limited to, basic academic, vocational/technical, college, on-the-job training, independent living skills, and personal and work adjustment training.

**Restoration Services:** Medical services and equipment such as physical and occupational therapy, wheelchairs, and automobile hand controls can be provided to enable you to pursue and achieve employment.

**Placement Assistance:** Counseling, job-seeking programs, job clubs, and job development used to increase your ability to get a job. You will receive ideas, practice, and advice on finding job leads, filling out applications, getting interviews for a job, and on how to interview. Your counselor may also give you job leads or contact employers about available tax credits and hiring incentives. The more contacts with employers you make, the better your chances are of finding a job. For more details, go to our [Services for Job Seekers page](#).

**Assistive Technology:** Assistive technology includes a wide range of devices and services that can empower persons with disabilities to maximize employment, independence and integration into society. OVR can assist an individual with a disability in effectively selecting and acquiring appropriate assistive technology. OVR can arrange for a consultant to evaluate your situation and to make appropriate recommendations. OVR also operates and maintains our own Center for Assistive and Rehabilitation Technology (CART) at the Hiram G. Andrews Center. There is no charge for evaluation and vocational counseling services through OVR. Based upon your financial needs, you may have to contribute to the cost of assistive technology devices and services. For more details, visit our [Assistive Technology page](#).

**Support Services:** Other services are provided for eligible persons if they are necessary for you to start and maintain employment. Such services may include:

- Room, board, and transportation costs during an evaluation or while completing a rehabilitation program.
- Occupational tools, licenses, or equipment.
- Home modifications, adaptive or special household equipment in order to help you get ready to go to and be on time for your job. Van or car modifications, including special driving devices or lifting devices to enable you to travel to your job.
- Personal care assistance provided to help you with your daily needs in order to enable you to participate in a vocational rehabilitation program.
- Job site modifications that will enable you to get and keep a job. Independent living training to provide the means for you to become more self-sufficient and thereby make it possible for you to participate in employment.
- Text Telephone (TT), signaling devices, hearing aids, and interpreters services may be provided to help you communicate.
- Specialized services such as Rehabilitation Teaching, and Orientation and Mobility Training for persons who are blind or visually impaired.

## **WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS?**

OVR will facilitate your rehabilitation program. Don't hesitate to ask questions about anything. You are entitled to the best service that OVR can give you. Your comments, suggestions, and criticisms are important.

If you are an applicant or a customer of OVR and are dissatisfied with a determination or service OVR is providing, you may file an appeal.

**Appeal Procedures:** A written request for a hearing must be made within thirty (30) days. This request must be mailed to or filed with the Director:

**Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
1521 North Sixth Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17102**

An impartial hearing officer will be assigned to hear and decide your case. You will be given the opportunity for an informal administrative review prior to the impartial hearing. At any time during your program you may contact the Client Assistance Program for help.

[Pennsylvania Client Assistance Program \(PA CAP\)](#)

[Comprehensive Workforce Development System \(CWDS\)](#)

*On Monday, November 19, OVR joined the new Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). To access the CWDS Public Website, click on the hyperlink above.*

**The [OVR Office Directory](#) will help you find an OVR district office near you.**

**You may refer yourself to OVR at the [CWDS website](#).**

Retrieved from <http://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/ovr/Pages/default.aspx> on 5/21/18

Dear Educator,

I hope you had a wonderful summer! I wanted to touch base and remind you of the resources available through PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). As you may know, OVR has greatly expanded and enhanced available Pre-Employment Transition Services to youth with disabilities. Services we may be able to provide to students with disabilities include:

- Community-based work assessments
- PAID work based learning experiences
- Counseling and evaluations to determine options for college or other post-secondary financial aid for college
- Job shadowing
- Transportation training
- Assistive technology/equipment
- Group training on workplace readiness, independent living, and self-advocacy skills
- AND MORE!

The goal of OVR services is to support individuals with disabilities in reaching the goal of competitive, integrated employment that is consistent with their interests and potential. Only a qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor can determine if an individual with a disability is eligible for OVR services. If you have a student with a disability who may benefit from OVR services, you may provide them with information on applying. OVR has switched to a new on-line application system. I have attached a one-page guide to applying on line which you may distribute to students, parents, or anyone else who may need the information. If you or a student has difficulty with completing an online application, please feel free to contact our office for assistance. I am also happy to attend transition or IEP meetings with parent's consent as my schedule allows to discuss OVR's role in transition and available services.

The Allentown District Office transition team (myself, Early Reach Coordinator, LaRonda Moorefield, and Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor Corey Cook) look forward to working with you to assist your students in becoming ready for successful transition from high school. We would also be happy to meet with you individually or in group format to further discuss our transition service and how we can work together effectively.

Sincerely,

Angela Paciotti M.S., CRC