

## Vocational Rehabilitation

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Looking for and finding work that best meets our interests, needs and ambitions while using our skills is challenging for everyone. A brain injury can radically change a person's needs and abilities, greatly influencing his or her work life.

### **Assess Needs and Abilities**

Depending on the nature and severity of your brain injury, you may or may not be able to return to the same job or a similar job to what you had before your brain injury. You should take extra care in assessing your job skills and abilities, as well as any changes you may have experienced. You want to be reasonable and realistic in your self-assessment and expectations. Some persons with brain injury have trouble with organization, distractibility, decision-making, impulsivity, fatigue, learning difficulties and relationships with co-workers. Vocational Rehabilitation can help you analyze your skills and interests by providing a vocational evaluation consisting of testing and a series of work and task assessments.

You have several options. You can prepare for work, go back to school to learn and/or relearn material, or volunteer.

### **Volunteering**

One excellent way to restore and explore job skills, interests and work habits is through volunteering. Voluntary work can give you valuable experience and be extremely rewarding. Volunteering can build your resume and help you feel more connected to the people around you. Plus, you can make a significant contribution to the world around us!

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Persons with brain injury may be eligible for services through Vocational Rehabilitation. These services can include evaluation, counseling, and testing, job coaching, diagnostic services, on-the-job training, assistive technology, supported employment, physical and mental restoration, transportation, rehabilitation engineering, college and vocational education, job placement, and personal assistance.

When you call Vocational Rehabilitation you will begin with an initial interview. During the interview you will be asked to provide some information about your disability. You may need to provide your medical records, sign a release form, or need other evaluations. Once the interview is complete, you will need to submit an application in order to apply for services.

After your application is processed and approved, you will meet with your VR counselor. During this meeting you can find out what a counselor's responsibilities are for ensuring that you meet your goals. You may want to ask your counselor about policies regarding funding for things such as assistive technology. Occasionally, the counselor assigned to you may not be a good match for your personality. You have the right to address this issue and ask to be transferred to another counselor.

If you are notified that services have been denied but you think you should be eligible, call and ask how to appeal the decision. Please do not feel that you are "complaining" or "being difficult." The appeals process is there for a reason.

### **Placement Services**

Placement services are available through VR to individuals who are made eligible and would like assistance establishing vocational goals, preparing for work, and post-employment support.

For more information on the services Vocation Rehabilitation offers, please call the state office at **(919) 855-3500**.

Regional Offices: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dvrs/vr-local-offices>