



Employment Plans

How can SSB or VRS help me find work?

If you are eligible for services from Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB), you and your rehabilitation counselor may decide that an evaluation is needed. The evaluation is used to determine your strengths, priorities, interests and needs in order to work. The evaluation helps you develop a plan of action called an Employment Plan (EP). It is also sometimes called an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

What's an Employment Plan (EP)?

The EP is a written plan that identifies the kind of job you want to get and lists the steps you need to take in order to get that kind of job.

There are 3 ways to develop an EP:

1. on your own
2. with help from your rehabilitation counselor, or
3. with help from anyone else who is willing to help

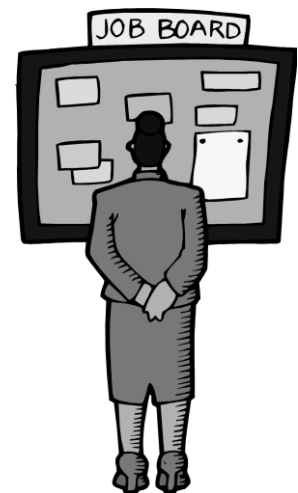
Your counselor must give you information in writing that explains help you can get for writing your EP. There should also be a complete description of things that should be in your EP. If you need the information in another format because of your disability, they have to make sure you get it that way too.

You can't get most VRS or SSB services until an EP is done and signed. So, the sooner you do your EP, the sooner you can get rehabilitation services.

Writing your Employment Plan

An EP usually has the following information:

- your job goal and when you will reach it
- the specific services you need to reach the job goal. Each service listed must be necessary for you to get and keep a job. Include service providers, starting dates and information about where needed money is coming from.
- how you and your counselor will know you are making progress towards your job goal



- services and benefits from other programs that help you reach your goal
- responsibilities of VRS or SSB
- your responsibilities and
- approval signatures from you and your counselor



Be Specific! Your EP should be as specific as possible. In other words, make your job goals detailed, not broad and general. Know what services and equipment you need to achieve your job goal. Know who provides these services. Be sure your EP reflects your strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities and limitations.

Make sure you understand and agree to the things in your EP. This makes it more likely that you will succeed.

If you do not know what services or equipment you need or if you and your counselor disagree about what you need, VRS or SSB may say you should have a neutral person evaluate your needs. This neutral person should be someone familiar with the needs of people with disabilities like yours.

Your EP must also have information about your rights, what you can do if there are problems, and information on the Client Assistance Project (CAP).

You and your counselor must **agree** to **all parts** of the EP to make it valid. Both you and your counselor must sign the EP. Signing the EP means that you both agree to everything in it.

Remember, VRS and SSB can't give you services until you have a valid EP. Your EP is a critical step in getting the rehabilitation services you need to get or keep a job.

Comparable Services and Benefits

Before certain services can be put in your EP, your counselor must check if another source can pay for the service. These services are called "comparable services and benefits." They are services or benefits that:

- can be paid for, in whole or in part, by another federal, state or local public agency or employee benefits
- are available at the time you need them and
- are like the services you would get from VRS or SSB

But your counselor doesn't have to look for a comparable service or benefit if it means it would delay:

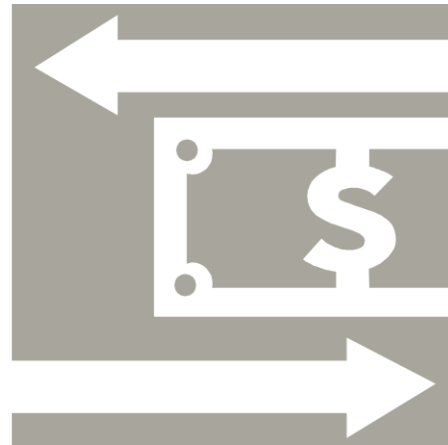
- your progress towards achieving an employment outcome
- an immediate job placement or
- the provision of services when you were at extreme medical risk

Do I have to pay for services listed in my EP?

VRS or SSB look at your available financial resources. Depending on your financial situation, you might have to help pay for some services. The part you have to pay for services is called "consumer financial participation (CFP)."

BUT the following services are available and free to everyone, no matter what their financial situation is:

- evaluations to decide eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs
- vocational counseling, guidance and referral services
- job search and placement services
- personal assistance services
- disability-related interpreter services, reader services or other services you need to be able to use rehabilitation services



If you are eligible for Social Security disability benefits you do not have to pay for any part of your services.

Signing Your Employment Plan

Once your EP is done, you need to sign the written plan. If you do not agree to the EP, do not sign it. VRS and SSB must give you a copy of the EP in a language you understand. The EP must be reviewed and updated in writing each year.

If you have issues with your counselor when doing an EP, contact the Client Assistance Project (CAP) for help.

Client Assistance Project (CAP)

If you are a client or an applicant of VRS or SSB, you can call the Client Assistance Project (CAP) for help if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your vocational rehabilitation services. CAP **does not** provide direct vocational rehabilitation services, like education, training or equipment.

See our fact sheet [Client Assistance Project \(CAP\)](#).



For more information about CAP or to apply for CAP services, call:

- (612) 334-5970 (metro area)
- 1-800-292-4150 (statewide)

Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.

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