



## Can I Get Services from VRS?

### What is VRS?

The federal Rehabilitation Act says money has to be used for vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. These services can help you get or keep a job. In Minnesota, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) offers services to people with physical and/or mental disabilities who want to work.

### Can I get services?

In general, you are eligible to get services from VRS if:

1. You have a physical and/or mental disability that makes it very hard to get or keep a job

**and**

2. You need vocational rehabilitation services to get ready for, find, or keep a job



VRS looks at how much your disability limits you, and if you can benefit from services. They use reports from your doctor or other professionals to decide.

If you are eligible for Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits based on your disability **AND** have not yet reached full retirement age you are automatically eligible. Unless you are too severely disabled to benefit from services.

If VRS decides you can't benefit from services because your disability is too severe, they must prove this "by clear and convincing evidence."

### Does everyone who's eligible get help?

Unfortunately, VRS does not usually have enough funding to serve every eligible person. They decide who they can help first using an "Order of Selection." This means some people get services sooner than others. It depends on how bad their disability is.

The Order of Selection puts people with the most severe disabilities ahead of those with less severe disabilities.

People with the least severe disabilities may not get services at all unless there is enough funding in the VRS program to serve everyone.

## What is a severe disability?

You have a **severe disability** if:

1. your disability makes one or more of the following things very hard:

- getting from one place to another
- talking and listening to others
- taking care of yourself
- making or carrying out plans
- work tolerance (you need changes at work to do a job)
- having the skills to have a job
- getting along with others

**and**

2. you need more than one service over a long time to get ready for, find or keep a job.



## Order of Selection

VRS's Order of Selection is made up of 4 categories. The people in the first priority get services first.

– **First priority:**

This is people with the most severe disability. You are in this group if you have a serious limitation in 3 or more of the things listed above.

– **Second priority:**

You are in this group if you have a serious limitation in 2 of the things listed above.

– **Third priority:**

You are in this group if you have a serious limitation in 1 of the things listed above.

– **Fourth priority:**

You are in this group if you are eligible but have less severe disabilities.

People who are least severely disabled are usually put on a waiting list for services. For up-to-date information on the status of the waiting list, contact your local VRS office.

## How do I apply?

1. You have to call or go to your local VRS office. If you don't know where the nearest office is, call the main VRS office in St. Paul. They can tell you which office to call.

The main VRS Office in St. Paul:

- Metro Twin Cities Voice 651-259-7366
- Toll Free Voice: 1 (800) 328-9095

You can also find your office online at: <https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/find-vrs/>

2. They will give you an application to fill out and a "release of information" form to sign. The release of information form lets VRS get things like medical and other records from doctors and programs you have been to.



3. You will probably go through a brief orientation process.

Then a VRS staff person gathers as much information as possible about your past work history, education and training, abilities and interests, rehabilitation needs, and career goals.

VRS looks at existing information as much as they can. If that is not enough to determine if you are eligible, VRS works with you to get other information they need. If there is a cost to get that information, you can ask VRS to pay for it.

Most decisions are made within 60 days of the date you hand in your application.

## If You are Denied Services

If VRS denies your application, they have to send you a letter that tells you:

1. why you were denied
2. about your rights and what you can do if there are problems **and**
3. about the Client Assistance Project (CAP) and how CAP may be able to help you
  - If you are denied because your disability is too severe

**or**

- if you are denied but your job goal is to work in center-based employment (like a sheltered workshop or a DT&H) and not in a competitive job that pays at least the minimum wage,

Then VRS must give you a chance to have a full consultation **before** they can decide to deny your application. In this situation, you have 2 basic rights:

1. VRS reviews your application each year to determine whether you become eligible at a later date or
2. You can appeal the denial immediately. See our fact sheet [Appeals to VRS](#)



### **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.**

*Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.*

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