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# "Consumer Handbook" for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, January 2005 Edition

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Maine Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Maine State Rehabilitation Council

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*State of Maine*

*Department of Labor*

*Bureau of Rehabilitation Services*

*Division of Vocational Rehabilitation*

## **"Consumer Handbook"**

For  
Vocational Rehabilitation Services

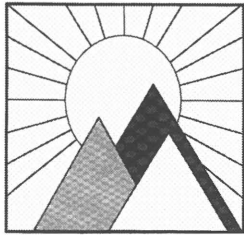
January 2005 Edition

(Developed in conjunction with the **Maine State Rehabilitation Council**)

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## **WILL I BE ELIGIBLE FOR DVR SERVICES?**

Once you've made the decision to apply for services with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (DVR), the next step is to work closely with your VR Counselor to determine your eligibility. In general, people are eligible for services if they have a significant impairment that impedes their ability to work, and if they require vocational rehabilitation services to attain or maintain employment.

The eligibility decision may be immediate if you are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and you plan to go to work. If you are not currently receiving Social Security benefits, it may take as long as several weeks to determine your eligibility if information concerning your disability must be secured from other sources such as your doctor.

In addition to basic eligibility, DVR currently has a policy that gives priority to persons with more significant disabilities. This is called the Order of Selection. The Order of Selection is necessary when demand for services exceed the agency's resources.

Sometimes it may be necessary for the DVR to arrange for medical tests or other assessments to determine your eligibility or priority under the Order of Selection. This would be at no cost to you. You will be fully informed throughout each step of the process and you are encouraged to be involved in how these assessments are done, including the selection of providers for these evaluations.

Examples of some types of DVR assessments include:

- collecting information about your history and any records that document your disability;
- trial work experience / job testing;
- psychological assessment
- medical evaluations
- talking with you to determine how your disability may impact

employment

- other evaluations that are determined to be necessary by you and your VR Counselor

Our goal is to make your eligibility determination as quickly as possible with the minimum amount of tests and paperwork. The law requires that this process be completed in no more than 60 days. If there is need to exceed 60 days because of insufficient information, we will ask you to sign an agreement to extend the period for eligibility determination.



## **Informed Consumer Choice**

Informed Consumer Choice is a concept that should guide all decision-making that occurs throughout your experience with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The Rehabilitation Act says that you are an equal partner in all decisions made concerning:

- **Your assessment**
- **Your employment goal**
- **Vocational rehabilitation services**
- **The choice of service providers**
- **Ways of obtaining vocational rehabilitation services**

Informed Choice also means that you are made aware of all the information and options available with regard to your rehabilitation. If you need help understanding these options or support in carrying out these functions, you may ask your VR Counselor, a person you know or an Advocate from the Client Assistance Program (CAP). (See page 22 for contact information)

With choice comes responsibility. It is important for you to work together with your VR Counselor and others who are assisting you to reach your employment goal. Choice is not demanding what you want. There are factors that influence choices such as: your abilities and capabilities; available financial resources; job market; legal and safety issues; cost effectiveness; etc. Therefore, it is very important for you and your VR Counselor to explore realistic options and create opportunities that lead to meaningful employment outcomes.

Informed Consumer Choice is the cornerstone of your experience with VR. Discuss this partnership often with your VR Counselor.

## **HOW DO I MAKE A GOOD CAREER CHOICE?**

Making a career choice involves matching your abilities, interests, values and personality with the demands of the real world of work. This is an active process consisting of activities designed to help you pick a job goal. Your VR Counselor is available to help you with this process.

### ***There are Four Steps in Choosing a Career:***

#### **I. Knowing Yourself**

The process begins with a detailed exploration of yourself. What motivates you? What are your interests? What are you good at? What is your personality? What disability-related issues impact your career choice? Where you want to live and work. This can be done through a variety of ways, including self-assessment, in-depth counseling interviews with your VR Counselor, paper and pencil tests (such as interest or ability tests), job shadowing and career groups.

#### **II. Occupational and Educational Information Gathering**

Because occupational and educational information is always changing, it is important that you gather information about the world of work, and determine where you best fit. Your VR Counselor can help you with this process. There are a number of resources available to you for career information through Department of Labor's Career Centers and the Internet. There are also vocational activities that may help with this step, such as visiting a job site and observing people doing the job in which you're interested or trying out the job yourself for a short period of time.

In addition, talking to employers or other people in the field in which you are interested is an excellent way to learn more about the career(s) you are considering. The Career Exploration Form, in the appendix, can help you gather some of the information that will be important for you to know. Your VR Counselor may also have some of this information from talking to employers. The more of this type of information you can gather, the better your career decision is likely to be. In developing your Individualized Plan for Employment, it will be

helpful to share any of the information you have gathered with your VR Counselor.

**TRIAL WORK EXPERIENCE-** If you do not know the kind of work you want to do, or if your VR Counselor is unsure about how VR can assist you, your counselor may first set up a trial work experience for you.

If your employment interests require formal education and training, and there are some questions around the appropriateness of such training, your counselor may develop a trial educational evaluation, where you would have the opportunity to attempt limited training as part of your evaluation.

### **III. Career Decision Making - Finding the Right Match**

Once you have gone through a good self-assessment process and completed the occupational information phase, you are ready to make a sound decision about matching your skills, abilities, values and personality with the demands of your chosen occupation. By using a trial work experience, you and your counselor can determine if a type of work is a good match for you, something for which you have the aptitudes for and enjoy doing. The information gathered in a trial plan will be used in any further work you and VR do together. Additionally, your VR Counselor can help you assess the physical or mental demands required and potential reasonable accommodations you might need to be successful.

### **IV. Planning a Course of Action**

Developing a DVR Individualized Plan for Employment with a focused employment goal which details the services and supports you will need to reach your goal is one good way of planning a course of action. Your VR counselor is available to help in developing this plan.



## **HOW DO I DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT?**

### ***What is an Individualized Plan for Employment?***

An Individualized Plan for Employment is a written document that you and your VR Counselor have agreed to that describes a realistic goal for you, and a plan for how you will reach that goal. It is the outcome of analyzing such things as your local labor market, previous work experience, how your disability impacts on your ability to work and the type of job in which you are interested and can be successful. The plan outlines how you will achieve employment with the assistance of vocational rehabilitation services. The plan may be very simple and quick or it may require considerable time and care to develop. This will depend on your particular circumstances. It will take into consideration your unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests and informed choice.

### ***How and When is the Individualized Plan for Employment Developed?***

Once it has been determined that you are eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services, you may begin to develop your Individualized Plan for Employment. The goal and services required in the plan are based on your input. It is also based on the information that you or others provide regarding your abilities and interests. You are welcome to involve any individuals of your choosing in this process. These may include family, friends, members of your support network, advocates, or experts outside of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.

You can work on your plan development in any combination of the following ways:

- You can work directly with a VR Counselor.
  - You can work on your own or with support from any of the resources noted above. DVR can help you with information or guidance as you request. We will act as your consultant. Regardless of which option you use, there must be agreement between you & your VR counselor before any plan is implemented.

In addition to information provided in this handbook, DVR has many books and resource information in each location that can help you to develop a meaningful plan. Talk to your VR counselor for help finding them.

### ***How Do I Develop an Individualized Plan for Employment That is Right for Me?***

DVR has an Individualized Plan for Employment form that must be completed, and your VR Counselor will provide you with a copy of that form. What is even more important, however, is the thought and planning that is done in preparation for writing the plan. The Individualized Plan for Employment Worksheet, in the appendix section of this handbook can help you with the planning process.

There are basically two steps to developing this plan: deciding on an employment goal and how you will reach that goal. Under the DVR program, plans are developed based on your unique needs, taking your choices into consideration. Our job is to help you to be informed about your choices.

This means that you understand not only what you want, but also what the alternatives are and what the consequences are of making certain choices. There are also some rules that DVR must follow.

### ***Deciding on an Employment Goal***

There are many things you need to consider when deciding on an employment goal. First, what work experience and skills do you currently have? What type of job best fits you as a person, taking into consideration such things as your abilities, capabilities, and interests? Next look at the job itself. Some of the questions to think about are: Is this a job where there are many opportunities for employment? Where are the potential employers located and will transportation be an issue? What opportunities will there be in the future for you in this field? What will this job pay, and does that meet your needs? Is there flexibility in working conditions? Another thing to think about is what it will take to reach the goal. What resources will you need to reach the goal? If the goal will require a lot of

preparation time, can you afford to be unemployed for an extended period of time while you prepare for the goal?

Your VR Counselor can help you look for an employment goal that is right for you. Your VR counselor has information about different careers, may know other people or activities that can help you to get more information, and can help guide you through the process of making a decision. You may also choose to involve individuals outside of DVR in the development of your employment goal.

For additional information on choosing a job goal, see the section of this handbook called, ***“How Do I Make a Good Career Choice?”***.(Page 8)

### ***Developing a Plan for Reaching the Goal***

Your Individualized Plan for Employment will describe the services that you will need in order to reach your goal, the time frames for the goal and services and the responsibilities of everyone involved in your plan.

The services that are included in this plan should be only those that are necessary to achieve your employment goal. Things you should consider include: What will you need to reach the goal? How long will it take you to achieve this goal? What is the most efficient way of getting to the goal, both in terms of time and costs? Who are the potential providers of services, and which one will be best for you? Will you have any problems in accessing the services you need (due to such things as transportation, disability-related issues, etc.)?

Your VR Counselor can assist you with the process of developing an appropriate plan of services. Your VR Counselor will be able to help you find out what services you may need to reach your goal and can tell you what DVR rules apply. For most services, your VR counselor will have information regarding who can provide the services you need. **DVR encourages you to talk with the service providers and get more information from them before deciding which one to choose.** You may



also choose to involve any individuals or sources outside of DVR in the development of your Individualized Plan for Employment.

Once you and your VR Counselor have agreed on your job goal and the services you require to achieve that goal, your plan can be written, signed by you and your VR Counselor, and services may begin. You will receive a copy of the IPE and any amendments made to the plan.

### ***How Will DVR Decide Whether or Not to Approve My Plan?***

DVR will look at a number of factors in deciding whether or not to approve your plan. The major things that DVR will consider are:

- Is the plan consistent with your strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice?
- Are the services requested essential toward reaching your goal?
- How will the plan be monitored to ensure a successful outcome?
- Are the time frames realistic toward reaching your goal?
- Have other sources of funding been explored, when appropriate?
- Are the sources of payment identified in the plan?
- Is the service being provided in the most cost effective manner?
- Are treatments or interventions that you need to be successful addressed in the plan?
- Are the services consistent with DVR regulations and policies?

### ***What Happens If I Want to Change My Program or If I Need More Services?***

It is important that you contact your VR Counselor immediately to discuss any changes in your program. When changes are agreed upon, the Plan will be amended. You and your counselor will review and update your plan at least once a year, even if there are no major changes.

### ***What If I Have Questions or Concerns About My Individualized Plan for Employment?***

Your VR Counselor is the key person you can go to for answers. The provision of any particular service is based on individual needs. If your counselor cannot answer your questions to your satisfaction, you should request to speak to a DVR supervisor. If you still disagree with DVR, there are other procedures that may help. For more information about this, see the section of this book called, "What Do I Do if I Disagree?" (Page 22 of this guide)

## **WHO WILL PAY FOR THE SERVICES I NEED?**

Each person's Individualized Plan for Employment is different. It describes the employment goal, the services needed to reach that goal, and the agreement between you and DVR. Many resources may be used to cover the costs of services under the Individualized Plan for Employment, including your resources, your family's, your insurance or benefits, other public programs and/or DVR. Each Individualized Plan for Employment should carefully spell out who is responsible to pay for what services.

- You will be asked to voluntarily contribute resources toward the cost of your Individualized Plan for Employment. Examples of how you might contribute resources include paying a vendor for a portion of the cost of the services you need or getting some of the services on your own. DVR strongly believes that the personal investment of each individual is an important ingredient in making the Individualized Plan for Employment meaningful and successful. You are not, however, required to provide a contribution and your plan cannot be held up if you are not able to contribute.
- Before DVR funds can be used, it is required by law to determine if there are other resources (such as other agencies, your health insurance, financial aid for post-secondary education, employee benefits) that will pay for the services you need. You may be required to apply for these other resources. DVR will also use any other resources that are readily available toward the costs of your Individualized Plan for Employment.
- DVR may pay for services or goods that are not available from other sources and that are agreed upon in your Individualized Plan for Employment. These goods and services must be purchased in a way that agrees with state and Bureau purchasing policies and terms. DVR is only able to use service providers who agree with these policies and terms.



- You can choose services that DVR could secure more cost effectively elsewhere, but you may have to pay the difference.

If you have any questions about who is paying for services in your Individualized Plan for Employment, please ask your VR Counselor. It is important that you know who is paying and what the costs are for services and goods in your Individualized Plan for Employment. This knowledge will help you make better decisions about the services that you receive.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BENEFITS IF I GO TO WORK?**

If you receive disability based cash or medical benefits (such as Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, State Supplement, Medicare and/or Medicaid), there are rules for which you may qualify which would allow you to try work and still receive benefits. **It is important that you get accurate information, so that you can make good decisions about your vocational goals, your potential earnings and your health insurance needs BEFORE you embark on an employment plan.**

**Social Security Has a Number of Work Incentives That Allow You to Work and Still Receive Benefits. Here Are Just Some Examples.**

### ***Did You Know That:***

#### **If you receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits**

- You can go to work for a Trial Work Period and still receive your benefits. After that Trial Work Period is over, Social Security will decide if you are earning enough to end your benefits.
- There are situations where you can earn over what is called 'substantial gainful activity' (\$830 a month as of 2005) after your Trial Work Period and continue to receive your full monthly benefit amount.
- Even if you go off SSDI due to earnings for an extended period of time, SSDI benefits can be reactivated, if you cannot work and Medicare can continue for an extended period of time.

#### **If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

- If you go to work, your check will be reduced depending on your earnings. Social Security counts less than half of your earnings when figuring how much SSI you would receive.

### **If you have a disability and receive Title XIX (Medicaid)**

- For SSI or State Supplement recipients: If you lose your cash benefits due to earnings, you can continue to be insured by Medicaid, until your earnings exceed a yearly limit.
- Recent increases in allowable earned income limits may make it possible for you to have substantial earnings and maintain Medicaid eligibility. You may have to pay a monthly premium, based on your annual income (and your spouse's income, if you are married).
- If Social Security determines that your impairment has improved but you still have an impairment, which is determined medically to be severe, you may be able to keep your Medicaid benefits as long as you continue to work.

### **How Do I Get the Information That I Need on Benefits So That I Can Make Good Vocational Choices?**

- Each person's benefits are unique. The work incentives apply to each person based on their individual circumstances. The best way to get accurate information on work and how it will affect your benefits is to contact the source of benefits, i.e. the Department of Health and Human Services; the Social Security Administration; Maine State Housing; or contact a Certified Benefits Specialist. These Benefits Specialists have extensive training in work incentives and many other benefits programs.
- You may ask your VR Counselor to set-up an appointment with a Benefits Specialist for you **OR** you can call one of the organizations below and request an appointment:

Alpha One: 207-767-2189, toll free: 1-800-640-7200  
Maine Medical Center 207-871-2088

## WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE THE DVR PROGRAM WORK FOR ME?

While going through the DVR program may take time or may be confusing, there are things you can do to make it easier. You and your VR counselor are partners and your active participation will help to speed up the process and achieve your goal more quickly. Here is a list of suggestions:

- ***Take responsibility for your program.*** You determine your future. Your VR Counselor is there to assist and guide you, but there will be things you need to accomplish for yourself such as the following:
- ***Think about your Employment Interests*** prior to meeting with your VR Counselor. Carefully think about what are your likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. Consider long-term career goals and how you can achieve them. Having ideas to discuss with your VR Counselor can help you get to know each other. Programs that are well thought out are much more likely to succeed.
- When possible, ***keep scheduled appointments.*** Missing appointments may delay your program. If you must cancel, call ahead of time to reschedule.
- ***Ask*** if you should bring anything to your appointments. When possible, obtain medical or educational records that will be needed by DVR. Your VR Counselor will tell you what is necessary to determine your eligibility or to do an Individualized Plan for Employment.
- ***Record important information*** or ask that it be put in writing for you. Keep your own DVR file with all the papers you receive.
- ***Plan ahead*** when making vocational or educational plans. You may be disappointed if you wait until the last minute before applying for services or contacting your VR Counselor.



- ***Keep in touch with your VR Counselor.*** You don't have to wait for a call. If the VR Counselor is not available, leave your name and where and when you can be reached.
- ***Ask questions.*** The DVR program may be confusing and your VR Counselor can provide answers. For additional advice or assistance, you may call the Client Assistance Program (CAP) at (207)-622-7055 or 1-800-773-7055 Voice only- Use Maine Relay at 711 or 1-800-437-1220 for TTY calls.
- DVR has a **State Rehabilitation Council**, whose membership is appointed by the Governor, which meets to provide direction and to recommend policy for the agency. If you would like to contact a council member, please call 1-866-622-6655 voice / TTY or 622-6655

## **WHAT DO I DO IF I DISAGREE WITH DVR?**

If you disagree with a decision that DVR makes concerning you, there are several options to resolve the disagreement. Below is a description of some of those options, which are designed to help you and DVR move forward in planning for your vocational rehabilitation.

### ***Discuss the Issue with DVR***

If you have a disagreement, DVR encourages you to first discuss your concerns with your VR Counselor. This is potentially the fastest and most simple way of resolving any differences. If you are not able to resolve your differences by talking with your VR Counselor, you may want to discuss the issue with another DVR representative, such as the supervisor, regional manager or a DVR central office manager. The local DVR office can give you information on how to contact any of these individuals and in some instances change your VR Counselor.

### ***Contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP)***

The Client Assistance Program is operated by CARES Inc. CAP provides information, advice, advocacy and, if determined necessary, legal representation to persons who have concerns about the rehabilitation services they receive from DVR. The CAP is required to use informal means, i.e. negotiation, in resolving conflicts, to the maximum extent possible, before resorting to formal or legal means i.e. Mediation or Due Process Hearing. Each case is unique and in some instances it may be determined that the only way to resolve a dispute is to go straight to Mediation and Due Process Hearing. You have the right to request any means of resolving a disagreement within thirty (30) days of the dispute, with or without assistance from the CAP. CARES, Inc. is located at 47 Water St. Suite 104, Hallowell, ME 04347. They can be reached at 207-622-7055 or toll-free at 1-800-773-7055 for voice callers. TTY callers use Maine relay by dialing 711 or 1-800-437-1220. The fax number is 207-621-1869. (email: [capsite@aol.com](mailto:capsite@aol.com) or on the internet at: [www.caresinc.org](http://www.caresinc.org).) All advice and discussions with CAP are confidential and will not affect your services adversely.

## ***Dispute Resolution Procedures***

### ***Negotiation***

Negotiation usually involves helping with communication between you and your VR Counselor or discussing different ways of overcoming disagreements. Negotiation is often the quickest way to resolve a problem.

### ***Mediation***

Mediation is a voluntary informal dispute resolution process in which the mediator, who is not a DVR employee, helps you and DVR to reach an agreement. The mediator has no power to make a decision for you or DVR. If you come to an agreement with DVR, the agreement would be put in writing and signed by you and DVR. You will receive a copy of this agreement. This type of dispute resolution may be provided only if both you and DVR agree to be involved with Mediation.

### ***Due Process Hearing***

In a Due Process Hearing, you would present the information you are disputing to a hearing officer, who is not an employee of DVR. The process is much more formal and the information presented by both you and DVR is generally more involved than in Mediation. In a Due Process Hearing, both you and DVR are usually represented by advocates or attorneys and may call witnesses. The process of scheduling, conducting the hearing and the making the decision by the hearing officer generally takes much longer than for an Informal Review. If you disagree with the hearing officer's decision, you may appeal the decision further through the court system.

### ***Requesting a Due Process Hearing or Mediation***

Requests for Mediation and Due Process Hearings must be in writing and sent to the DVR Director. The addresses for the DVR central office can be found at the end of this booklet. If you decide that you want to go through one of these procedures, DVR must receive your request within thirty days after DVR informs you of the decision with which you disagree. In any of

these procedures, you have a right to bring a representative (for example, a CAP advocate, an attorney, a family member, etc.). However, DVR would not be responsible for the costs of your bringing a representative (such as the fees charged by a private attorney).



## DVR SERVICES (OVERVIEW)

The vocational rehabilitation program offers a wide range of services to individuals who are eligible. The plan for services is developed based on the individual needs of each person that DVR serves. Therefore, the services provided to one person may be very different than those provided for another.

As a general rule, in order for DVR to provide a service:

- (1) you must require the service in order for you to succeed in achieving your employment goal; and
- (2) the service must be unavailable to you through other resources.

The following is a listing of the types of services that DVR may provide, if needed as part of your Individualized Plan for Employment. You are encouraged to ask your VR Counselor or other DVR staff if you have questions about the availability or need for any particular service.

- **Assessment** services to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs. Depending on your situation, this may include such things as opportunities to simply look at actual work sites, work at a job on a trial basis, medical or psychological tests, or other ways to learn more about your disability and vocational rehabilitation needs.
- **Counseling, guidance,** and information about career and employment decisions (See section called ***“How Do I Make a Good Career Choice?”***\*)
- Referral to other service providers for services not available through this program
- ***Job placement services***\*
- ***Employment training***\* and other training services

- ***Physical and mental restoration services\****
- ***Self-employment services\****, including technical assistance and consultation for the establishment of small business operations, as well as
  - Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies
- ***Rehabilitation technology\****
- ***Transition planning from school to work\****
- ***Job coaching and supported employment services\****
- **Support Services may also be delivered to support the above-mentioned primary services. Some examples of support services are:**
  - Services to family members, if needed for the individual with a disability to achieve the employment goal
  - Expenses for additional costs incurred while participating in a DVR evaluation or an Individualized Plan for Employment
  - Transportation services – \* see page 36 for details.
  - Personal assistance services. These are services needed by an individual to assist in performing daily living activities as a result of the disability, which are necessary in order for the individual to achieve the employment goal.
  - Interpreter or reader services

- ***Post-employment services\**** to assist individuals to keep their job, to get a job in the same or related field, or to advance in their job

\* Further information is available in this booklet for a number of DVR services, including those noted in bold print followed by an asterisk \*.

## **Trial Work Experience**

### **(Situational Assessment)**

#### ***What Is a Trial Work Experience?***

A Trial Work Experience is an opportunity for you to try one or more real jobs, to see how those jobs match your interests and abilities. The choice of jobs will be based on your interests, abilities, and needs. Assessments may vary in length depending on your particular situation, but usually last for 40 hours over a two-week period. You may be paid for the work you do during the assessment, usually at the minimum wage.

Most of the time during the assessment, an evaluator will be with you, to see how you do on the job. He or she will look at many aspects of your job performance, such as your work skills, behaviors, relationships with the boss and co-workers, attendance, and work tolerance. From the Trial Work Experience, you will have the chance to see how you like the job and how good you are at it. Sometimes, a situational assessment may be set up with an employer who has a job opening, and if they are satisfied with your work, you may be offered a job. After the assessment is finished, you and your counselor will get a report from the evaluator telling how you did, whether the job seems suitable for you, and whether you will need other services to be successful.

#### ***What Is Important for Me to Know and Do?***

When it is agreed that you need a Work Trial Experience, your VR Counselor can help you select a community agency who can set up the assessment that will best meet your needs. Before the assessment begins, you need to be involved with the decision about the type of job you will do during the assessment. It is important that you let your VR Counselor and the evaluator know about anything that will help them find the right place to do the assessment. You need to let them know about your interests and abilities, as well as any concerns or preferences you may have about your work schedule, transportation, pay requirements, government benefits you



may receive, disability-related needs, work environment, location of the job, or any other information that will help in finding an assessment site that will best suit you. If you know of particular places where you would like to work, share this with DVR and the evaluator.

Before and during the assessment, it is important for you to understand what is expected of you. Good attendance at planning meetings and at work, arriving on time, proper clothing and getting along with the boss and co-workers will always be important. In addition, the particular job where you are assessed will probably have other requirements that you will need to know.

Finally, it is important for you to ask any questions that you may have and to provide feedback during the process.

## **JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES**

### ***What Are Job Placement Services?***

When you and your VR Counselor decide that you are ready to find a job, your VR Counselor will work with you to find employment or arrange for other services, if necessary to help you get a job.

Looking for work requires a full-time effort. To be successful in finding the job you want, it will be important for you to do your part. The more job-hunting you do, the better your chances of finding work. Some things you can do are to ask family and friends whether they know of any job openings, contact the nearest Department of Labor's One-Stop Career Center and to check the "Help Wanted" section of the newspaper.

There are a number of services that DVR may provide to assist you with placement, depending on your needs. These services may be provided directly by DVR staff or through other agencies.

- **Job Seeking Skills (JSS)** - JSS provides assistance with interviewing skills, resume writing and application techniques to help you prepare for your job search. JSS may be individual assistance or provided as part of a class.
- **Individual Placement Assistance** - Your VR Counselor or another agency may help you identify local employers who might have job openings in your area of interest or advise you on interviewing and resume writing. If needed, arrangements can be made for someone to accompany you to interviews.
- **Job Clubs** - Job clubs are group sessions, which provide information on current local job openings, follow-up with employers, and ongoing support.

- **Trial Work Experience** - A Trial Work Experience is an opportunity for you to try out a real job to determine if you are suited to a particular type of work. A job coach, who assists you in learning the job and to observe your performance, accompanies you. The employer may offer you a job if you perform well during the assessment.

### ***Can DVR Continue to Provide Assistance after I'm Working?***

- Your VR Counselor will maintain contact with you during your first 90 days on the job, or longer if necessary to make sure your job is satisfactory. With your permission, your VR Counselor may contact your supervisor to discuss your progress on the job.
- DVR can provide technical assistance to you and your employer to identify ways to modify the job site so you can perform better. This may include special equipment or rearranging the work site.
- DVR can provide post-employment services that assist you in retaining the job or finding another job in the same or related field, or to advance in your field. Post-employment services are limited to one or two services over a period of less than six (6) months. If there has been a change in your circumstances or your disability has changed you will need to reapply for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. If it has been more than three (3) years since your case was closed, you will need to reapply for services.

## **JOB COACHING AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

### ***What Is Job Coaching?***

A Job Coach (or Employment Specialist) is a person who provides the support you need to keep a job in the community. You may need the Job Coach only for a limited period of time, or you may need support from a Job Coach on an ongoing basis.

Some examples of how a Job Coach might support you are: helping you learn the skills needed for the job; helping you work with supervisors and co-workers; helping you learn how to use transportation for going to work; helping you to know what is expected of you on the job; providing assistance if the work becomes too difficult for you or if other problems arise that affect your work. Sometimes the Job Coach may work with your employer to teach him/her how to provide support to you. A Job Coach will usually meet with you at work, but may meet with you off the job, if that is appropriate and more comfortable for you.

### ***What Is Supported Employment?***

Supported employment is a regular job in the community with the ongoing supports (usually job coaching) to help you keep the job. It is designed for persons who, because of a significant disability, are expected to need supports for as long as they remain employed. The amount of support you would receive on a daily or weekly basis will depend on your particular needs.

DVR is able to provide these services only on a time-limited basis. Because people who are in supported employment will need long-term supports, plans must be made for who will provide the job coaching or other supports after DVR services are finished. In fact, the law requires that these plans be made *before* someone starts in supported employment. Therefore, it is very important that you work with your counselor to apply for other services that may be available to provide the ongoing support after the DVR services are completed. Examples of resources that may be



available to provide these ongoing supports are the Department Behavioral and Developmental Services, Social Security Impairment-Related Work Expenses, The Bureau of Rehabilitation's Basic and Brain Injury Extended Support Funds, natural supports from an employer and family support.

### ***What is Transitional Employment?***

Transitional Employment is a model of supported employment designed for individuals who have severe psychiatric disabilities. A community rehabilitation provider, or clubhouse promises the employer that the job will get done and operates the job site. The advantages of this approach are that you could get into a job setting and get experience without the pressures of the formal job seeking process. You have the opportunity of earning income at the prevailing wage for the particular job. You experience success by simply trying the job and, if for some reason you cannot continue, someone else works at the jobsite, you have the support of the clubhouse and will be offered other opportunities when you are ready. This helps limit the feelings of 'failure'. You may also have the opportunity to try a number of different jobs. This builds your job history, provides a source of work references and hopefully builds your confidence, while offering the safety net and other support services through the clubhouse program. When you complete six months on one Transitional Employment site you most likely will go on to work at another site. The Transitional Employment option is not the same as a permanent job, but it is an excellent skill building opportunity that can lead toward successful employment. Many who have used the Transitional Employment process have found that a series of such placements in different workplaces, doing different jobs, with different people, is very helpful in gaining the confidence and references necessary to secure independent employment. Success with Transitional Employment puts you in an excellent position to pursue longer-term job and career choices.

### ***What Else Is Important for Me to Know?***

Job coaching and supported employment should be designed to meet your individual needs for keeping your job. The way DVR can set up job coaching is quite flexible. Some people may need more or different kinds of support than others. Some people work better with certain Job Coaches than others (for example, you may feel much more comfortable working

with a female or male Job Coach). It is important that you let your VR counselor know if you have specific needs in the amount or type of services that you receive. If you have any problems or concerns in working with your Job Coach, you should inform the VR Counselor.

## **SELF-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### ***What Is Self-Employment?***

Self-employment is a type of work where you own and operate your own business. It may be a business that you operate out of your home. It may also be called a small business enterprise or a micro-business enterprise.

### ***Do I Qualify for Self-Employment Services?***

If your employment goal is to be self-employed or to establish a small business enterprise, DVR may be able to assist you with establishing or maintaining the business.

In general, setting up your own business will require a significant commitment of your time and resources to be successful. The Division may be able to help you in the development of self-employment or a small business enterprise under the following conditions:

- You will be required to attend a self-employment orientation program.
- You must develop a Business Plan and it must be approved by an Approved Business Consultant, like the Maine Small Business Development Center (CSBDC), as an economically viable proposal. An alternate small business resource acceptable to both you and your VR Counselor may be used instead of the CSBDC. If you need additional assistance, there are numerous Small Business Development Counseling Centers offering ongoing consultation and workshops. Your VR Counselor will assist you with these connections.
- Prior to providing services under an Individualized Plan for Employment with a goal of self-employment, the Division must agree to both the goal and the business plan. It will be important for you and your counselor to discuss how you will decide whether the business is successful.

- The Bureau limits its contribution toward establishing a small business (excluding training costs and disability-related vehicle and/or work site modifications) to \$7,500.00 for a business that will allow you to become completely self-sufficient or \$2,500.00 that will allow you to work part time and continue to receive benefits such as SSI or SSDI.
- You will be required to seek outside financing for the start up costs of your business and you must contribute to your business in cash, in-kind labor, and/ or materials.
- You will be expected to own and operate at least 51% of the business.
- Self-employment services provided by DVR are limited to start-up services and goods. Examples might include business consultants, bookkeeping, advertising, initial stock, insurance, permits, fees, equipment supplies, rent, utilities, transportation, telephone and postage.
- Self-employment plans that are expected to result in your becoming self-sufficient (able to get off of all public benefits) require that you have a good credit record, or a pattern of managing your debt well.
- Once the small business enterprise is operating:
- Your VR Counselor will visit the business site and/or be in contact with you to see how the business is going. Before DVR closes your case with the agency, you and your VR Counselor will need to decide whether you still agree that the business is or will be successful. To help you be successful the time-period for follow up of people on self-employment plans is (2) two years.



## **Transportation Supports**

### **'Support Service'**

Talk with your VR counselor about whether transportation supports are necessary for your Individualized Plan for Employment.

- There is information about car maintenance available from your VR counselor that will help you to minimize the need for repairs and there is a process for obtaining assistance with repairs that includes determining the value of your car and consulting a certified mechanic. Ask your VR counselor if you have any questions.
- There is a worksheet that you can fill out with your counselor to help you decide if you can afford the upkeep of a vehicle. There are guidelines to help you and your counselor decide if transportation assistance is necessary for your IPE and if there are any other available funds to help you in obtaining a vehicle.
- It is possible to obtain assistance in purchasing a vehicle, following Power guidelines for a maximum of \$7,000. For more information, about transportation services talk with your VR counselor.



## **POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### ***What Are Post-Employment Services?***

Post-employment services may be provided to you after your case has been closed, to help you maintain, regain or advance in your current job, or find another job in the same or related field. It is important for you to know that post employment services are limited to one or two services that will take less than six months to complete and will require you to amend your Individualized Plan for Employment with your VR counselor.

### ***When Am I Eligible for Post-Employment Services?***

If you have received services from DVR and your case has been closed because you were working, you might be eligible. If you find you are having trouble with your job, are unable to advance in your job, or have lost your job, and you think it is because of your disability, you should contact your VR Counselor to inquire about post-employment services.

### ***Will I Have to Go Through Exams or Tests Again?***

Generally no. You are still considered eligible to receive services from DVR based on the information already in your case record. That information can usually be used to determine what services you need.

However, if your disability has changed, or if your circumstances and job goals have significantly changed, you may need to reapply for services. If you will need more than one or two services that will take more than 6 months to complete or it has been more than 3 years since your case was closed, you will need to reapply for services. At that time, additional exams or tests may be necessary.

## **EMPLOYMENT TRAINING**

### ***What Is Employment Training?***

It is the means by which a person learns the skills needed to do a particular job or type of work. Examples include:

- job tryouts (situational assessments)
- on-the-job training
- short-term specific skill training
- internships
- volunteer work
- vocational/technical school
- college training

### ***Can DVR Help with Employment Training?***

DVR may help, if training is needed for you to achieve your job goal, and if DVR has agreed to help you with this as part of your Individualized Plan for Employment. The type of training DVR will support depends on your abilities and interests, information about the job market, and research on how most people get into the kind of work you want to do.

### ***What Is Expected of Me?***

1. You and your VR Counselor must agree on your employment goal and whether training is needed to achieve it.
2. You need to be accepted for admission into the training program or school you will attend.

3. If you are applying to a college or other post-secondary institution, you must apply for financial aid and follow the school's procedures and timetables. Please refer to the section entitled "***Financial Aid for Post-Secondary Education***" in this booklet for further details.
4. You need to advise DVR of any disability-related needs that you will have in attending the program.
5. You must maintain the performance requirements of the school or program to remain in good standing.
6. You need to discuss any significant changes with your VR Counselor *beforehand* as your Individualized Plan for Employment may need to be revised.
7. You must provide VR with copies of your grades or progress reports and maintain regular contact with your VR Counselor.

**Vocational Rehabilitation, Post-Secondary Education,  
Training and You: A Consumer's Guide**  
(Developed by Maine Client Assistance Program)

**Introduction:** The purpose of this section of the handbook is to help you understand how Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Post-Secondary Education work and to explain all the roles and responsibilities of the individuals who are involved in the process.

This manual pertains to training programs, both educational and vocational, which qualify for and participate in the Federal Financial Student Aid Program. A Financial Aid Information Form will be used to identify your costs, resources and VR's contribution towards your program.

While we have attempted to identify the important issues and concerns, we know you will have questions. Please contact your VR Counselor when this occurs. Remember that good planning and frequent and open communication with all the players is the key to success in this area.

**What Does the Law Say?** Federal laws and the Maine VR rules say that if post-secondary education is required for you to attain an employment goal (job), VR may be able to help. The laws also say, however, that VR support for post-secondary education cannot be provided unless you make maximum efforts to secure assistance from other sources, including federal student aid.

**What Is Financial Aid?** Financial aid is designed to help individuals meet their educational expenses when their own resources are not sufficient. A student who believes that his resources and those of his/her family are not sufficient to pay for all the costs of attendance (tuition, room and board, books, transportation, campus activities, etc.) should apply for financial aid through the Financial Aid Office of the institution he or she plans to attend. Three types of aid are available.

1. Grants – gifts and scholarships, which do not have to be repaid.

2. Loans – money borrowed to cover school costs. It must be repaid, usually with interest, over a specified period of time. This usually takes place after the student has left school or graduated.

3. Work Study – employment, which enables a student to earn a portion of school costs.

The Federal Government contributes to all three types of student financial aid.

**What Is Family Contribution?** The family contribution is the amount of money the family of a student is expected to contribute toward college expenses. The family includes the student and the student's parents in the case of a dependent student, or the student and spouse, if any, in the case of an independent student. The amount the family is expected to contribute is calculated by a standardized needs formula that takes into account the family's financial resources (income and assets), family size and basic living expenses. VR must accept the family contribution amount provided by the FAO Office. All students applying for Federal financial assistance are required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). There is no charge to the student or the student's family for the processing of this form or for determining the student's eligibility for Federal financial assistance.

Some students receive little or no financial support from their parents when they enroll in a post-secondary education program. A student may qualify as financially independent if he or she is twenty-four years of age or older by December 31 of the award year. A student may qualify if he/she is a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States; is a graduate or professional student; is an orphan or ward of the court; is married; has legal dependents other than a spouse or is a student for whom a financial aid administrator makes a documented determination of independence by reason of other unusual circumstances. The family contribution of an independent student is calculated based upon the income and assets of the student and spouse, if married.

**Am I Required to Take a Loan?** You are **strongly encouraged** to take out loans towards your education, but this is not a federal or state requirement. However most people realize that loans are a



necessary part of attending a post-secondary education program. Consider the loans an investment in your future. Also you may need to consider taking out a loan to cover basic living expenses.

If you have defaulted on a previous student loan, you will be unable to receive any grants, additional student loans or work study assistance. You will need to demonstrate that you have made a reasonable effort to clear your default status before VR will consider replacing any grant award. As stated previously, VR support for post secondary training cannot be provided unless you make maximum efforts to secure assistance from other sources.

**How Does Vocational Rehabilitation fit Into the Financial Aid Process?** Once post-secondary education has been identified as a service you need to reach your employment goal, a coordinated, multi-step effort involving the institution, VR and you begins.

STEP 1. You will be asked to fill out SECTION A, PART 1 of the VR Financial Aid Information Exchange Form (a copy is attached). Once SECTION A, PART 1 is completed, this is sent to the Financial Aid Officer (FAO) at the institution you plan to attend.

STEP 2. SECTION B, PART 1 of the form is completed by the FAO using the information you provide, the number of courses, where you will live, etc. This section identifies your education-related expenses, expected contributions and all grants, loans, scholarships and/or work-study support. The result of these calculations is called your Unmet-Need, which is costs minus resources. The FAO keeps a copy and a copy is forwarded to your VR Counselor. Your VR Counselor is responsible for getting a copy to you.

STEP 3. You and your VR Counselor will take the information from SECTION B of PART 1 and complete all sections of PART 2 of the form. The reason for completing this form is to identify your actual costs of attending the program (vs. standard figures used by FAO), your resources from all sources, any disability-related expenses and to specify the amount of financial support you will receive from VR. Based on the information in Part 2, the Notification of Vocational Rehabilitation Funding form will be

completed with a copy forwarded to the FAO, a copy remains with VR and you receive a copy.

STEP 4. Many people will not need to be concerned with this step. However, if your VR Counselor has increased the Unmet Need amount due to higher actual costs such as transportation, childcare etc., the FAO will also need to increase your budget and the Unmet Need. If there are disability-related expenses provided from VR, your budget and the Unmet Need would need to be adjusted. None of these actions should decrease the amount of financial aid you will receive from the institution.

STEP 5. The final step in the process is for VR to forward the specified financial support to the institution.

**What Educational Expenses are Considered Disability Related?** The student with a disability is often faced with additional expenses not incurred by other students. Examples of these expenses include:

- Special equipment related to the disability and its maintenance;
- Expense of services for personal use or study such as readers, interpreters, note takers or personal care attendants;
- Transportation necessary to pursue an academic program, if regular transportation is not accessible;
- Medical expenses relating directly to the individual's disability that are not covered by insurance.

Students should be sure to inform the FAO of disability-related expenses that may previously have been covered by the family budget. These may also include food and veterinary bills for guide dogs, batteries for hearing aids and Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TTY), and/or costs of recruiting and training readers or personal care attendants. Often, leaving home necessitates the purchase of new or additional equipment that will allow the student to be independent at school. Some of the special equipment and support services may be available at the post-

secondary institution. You and your VR Counselor should check with the 504 Coordinator or Office of Disability Support Services at the institution to see what is available there.

**What Are My Responsibilities?** Your responsibilities include applying for and completing the Financial Aid information in a timely manner. You must demonstrate academic progress by carrying a course load of at least six credit hours per semester. You need to remain in good academic standing with the institution.

You will be encouraged to participate in the costs to attend the program through work-study and/or a student loan. Your VR Counselor also may ask you to explore other resources, which could assist in some post-secondary expenses. Examples of these resources include the Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS), Ticket To Work, ASPIRE, VA and Workforce Development Center.

You will be required to notify your VR Counselor of any changes in your status, i.e. full to part-time, and of any problems you are encountering at the institution

**Places for Additional Information:** Your VR Counselor and FAO should be able to answer the questions you have. Here are some places for more information.

1.The Federal Government has published a booklet called The Student Guide: Financial Aid from the U. S. Department of Education. Free copies may be obtained by writing Federal Student Aid Programs, Box 84, Washington, DC20044 or by calling 800-433-3243 or 800-730-8913 (TTY).

2.The Finance Authority Of Maine (FAME) is a program that may be a resource for students who want to further their education. In some cases, eligibility is possible for those who have defaulted on a previous loan, if certain criteria are met. For more information write to FAME, 119 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 or call 623-3263 or 1-800-228-3734.

3.The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is a federally funded advocacy program that can provide information and, if



necessary, representation to clients/applicants of VR. For more information write to CARES, Inc. 47 Water St. Suite 104, Hallowell, ME 04347 or call (207) 622-7055 or 1-800-773-7055 (Voice) TTY callers will need to use Maine Relay by dialing 711 or 1-800-437-1220. The CAP can also be reached via email: [capsite@aol.com](mailto:capsite@aol.com) or on the Internet at: [www.caresinc.org](http://www.caresinc.org) for those who have Internet access.

**A Final Word:** Financial aid is based upon a partnership between the student, parents, post-secondary institutions, federal government and agencies such as VR. The financial aid process can be complex and time consuming. It requires coordination, cooperation and communication between the FAO, the VR Counselor and you. Ask questions when things are not clear to you. Make sure you understand the roles and responsibilities of all the players. Leave enough time to complete all the paperwork. Be aware of the deadlines of the two organizations. And remember – good planning and frequent communication are the keys to success.

## **ON-THE-JOB TRAINING**

### ***Can DVR Help Me to Find a Job Where I Can Also Learn a Skill or a Trade?***

Yes, if training is necessary for you to achieve the job goal that you and your VR Counselor have agreed to in your Individualized Plan for Employment. The Division will assist you to obtain the skills you require to be successful in employment. In some cases an alternative to formal classroom training is to learn the skills you need while working at the job you desire. This is called on-the-job training (OJT). You and your counselor will need to fully discuss the pros and cons of you learning the required skills in this manner.

### ***How Do I Know If an OJT Will Work For Me?***

Once a job goal has been agreed upon and it is determined that you require training to obtain the skills you need to be successful in that job, you and your VR Counselor will begin the discussion of how you can best learn the skills. If your job goal is one that does not require formal education, you and your VR Counselor can explore the possibility of developing an on-the-job training site.

### ***How Does an OJT Work?***

It is not always easy to find an employer who is willing to train workers on the job. Therefore, locating a job site may take considerable effort on the part of you and your VR Counselor.



Once it is agreed that this employer can offer you the skills you need to be successful at your job goal, a written contract will be developed between you, the employer, and DVR. Included in this contract will be the hourly wages you will receive from the employer, the hours of training you will receive, and the length of time it will take for you to obtain entry-level skills. The contract will also specify whether the employer will consider you for permanent hire once you are trained and performing well, or whether you will need to take your newly acquired skills and seek employment elsewhere. In an OJT, DVR does not pay for your wages but rather will reimburse the employer for the time he/she spends with you to teach you the job.

## **TRANSITION PLANNING FROM SCHOOL TO WORK**

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services can provide assistance to students who are eligible for DVR in facilitating the transition from school to work.

### ***What Can DVR Do While I Am Still in High School?***

VR Counselors can play the following roles during the last two years of your school career:

- Participate in Pupil Evaluation Team meetings during the last several years of high school to assist in developing appropriate employment goals and objectives. If you are interested in having your VR Counselor attend any of these meetings, it will be important to give him/her sufficient notice of the meeting time, to insure that s/he is available;
- Get to know you and your family so you are comfortable in maintaining a relationship with your VR Counselor after graduation;
- Initiate and complete the DVR referral process and determine your eligibility, prior to graduation;
- Consult with you, your family and school staff to help promote employment experiences while you are still in school;
- Consult on curricula (course content) which will assist you to prepare for employment, post-secondary education and/or independent living;

- Assist you and your family in becoming familiar with, planning for and accessing needed employment-related adult service programs;
  - Refer you and your family to advocacy organizations which can assist you to advocate effectively for needed services; and
  - Develop an Individualized Plan for Employment that specifies what services and supports DVR will provide for you upon graduation from high school, as well as outline responsibilities for you and DVR towards achieving a successful employment outcome.

## **REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY**

### ***What Is Rehabilitation Technology?***

Rehabilitation technology is the evaluation and application of devices that assist individuals with disabilities to maintain or improve their ability to function. Rehabilitation Technology also includes any services needed to test, try, or learn the use of the devices. In vocational rehabilitation, rehabilitation technology is used for the purpose of assisting individuals to work more independently or to participate more independently in an Individualized Plan for Employment leading to competitive employment. There are many different kinds of technology devices. Some are simple and easy to use, such as a wide grip pencil, a telephone with large buttons, a calculator with large keys, a writing guide for a sheet of paper, a magnifier, or an adapted keyboard. Others are more complex and may require training to use. Examples include a computer with voice recognition software, a power wheelchair or scooter, prosthetic and orthotic devices (artificial limbs, braces), hearing aids and other communication devices, and motor vehicle modifications.

Your VR counselor will work with you to determine whether you need any rehabilitation technology devices or services. An evaluation by a technology specialist (an expert outside of DVR) may be provided to assist you in learning what technology is available and how it might improve your functioning as you think about your career plans and goals, or how specific job functions can be accommodated.

### ***What Is the Process to Get Rehabilitation Technology Services?***

1. You and your VR Counselor may agree on simple devices that can in most cases be purchased quickly and easily.
2. When you and your VR Counselor decide that you need a rehabilitation technology consultation, your VR Counselor will contact the DVR consultant for a referral to a technology specialist. Arrangements will be made for the technology specialist to meet and evaluate you in your

home, school, or place of employment. During the meeting, the technology specialist will talk with you about your specific needs and employment goals and may ask you to do some tasks to determine your level of functioning. After the meeting, the technology specialist will write a report to your VR Counselor describing his/her findings and recommendations.

3. Your VR Counselor will share the report with you and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions that you may have about the report. Once you and your VR Counselor agree that the recommendations are necessary for your Individualized Plan for Employment to be successful, arrangements will be made to purchase the device or arrange for the service. The length of time it will take to receive the equipment depends on the type of technology, the availability, and the purchase process. Customized devices (designed and manufactured especially to fit you) will take more time. DVR will also usually need to get competitive bids for higher cost purchases, which will increase the time required.

4. The Division will try to accommodate your preferences and choices as much as possible. If you have a preferred product or vendor you should be sure to let your counselor know.

5. In some instances you may need training to learn how to use the equipment. You and your VR Counselor can arrange for you to learn how to use the device once you receive the equipment. It will be your responsibility to cooperate with the training, to practice, and to complete all assignments.







## DVR OFFICES

**CENTRAL OFFICE**      *Tel:*    **624-5950**      *TTY:*    **624-5965**  
*150 State House Station*      *Toll Free: Voice Only:* **1-800-698-4440**  
    *Toll Free: TTY:* **1-888-755-0023**  
*Augusta*      *ME*      **04333-0150**      *Fax:*    **624-5980**

**PORTLAND Region I**      **Tel: 822-0400**      **TTY: 822-0412**  
**185 Lancaster Street**      **Toll Free: 1-800-315-1192**      **Fax: 879-7553**  
**Portland ME 04101**      **TTY Toll Free: 1-888-817-7113**

**SACO Region I**    *Tel:*    **286-2600**    *TTY:* **286-2613**    *Fax:* **286-2608**  
*110 Main Street, Suite 1106*    *Toll Free:* **1-800-521-5871**  
*Saco ME 04072*    *TTY Toll Free:* **1-800-492-0670**

**LEWISTON Region II** Tel: 753-9000 TTY: 753-9067  
5 Mollison Way Toll Free: 1-800-741-2991 Fax: 753-9051  
Lewiston ME 04240 TTY Toll Free: 1-877-796-9833

**AUGUSTA Region III Tel: 624-5120 TTY: 624-5314**  
**2 Anthony Avenue Toll Free: 1-800-760-1573 Fax: 624-5133**  
**Augusta ME 04333-0073 TTY Toll Free: 1-800-633-0770**

**ROCKLAND Region III**      **Tel: 594-1834**      **TTY: 594-0503**  
**279 Main Street, Suite 1**      **Toll Free: 1-800-432-1680**      **Fax: 594-1858**  
**Rockland ME 04841-9914**      **TTY Toll Free: 1-800-498-9262**

**BANGOR**    *Region IV*                      *Tel:*    561-4900            *TTY:*    561-4903  
45 Oak Street, Suite 1                      *Toll Free:* 1-888-545-8811    *Fax:*    561-4927  
Bangor            ME    04401                      *TTY Toll Free:* 1-800-498-6711

**ELLSWORTH**      **Region IV**    **Tel: 664-2300**    **TTY: 667-1576**  
**248 State Street, Suite 3A**    **Voice only Toll Free: 1-800-371-7543**  
**Ellsworth**    **ME**    **04605-1850**    **Fax: 667-4789**

**MACHIAS Region IV** Tel: 255-0130 TTY: 255-1908  
 15 Prescott Drive, Suite 2 Voice only Toll Free: 1-800-770-7774  
 Machias ME 04654 Fax: 255-3091

**SKOWHEGAN**      *Region IV*      *Tel: 474-4958*      *TTY: 474-4957*  
*140 North Avenue, P.O. Box 749*      *Voice Only Toll Free: 1-800-760-1572*

**Skowhegan ME 04976**

**Fax: 474-4914**

**HOULTON Region V Tel: 532-5300 TTY: 532-5301**  
**91 1/2 Military Street, Suite 3 Voice Only Toll Free: 1-800-691-0033**  
**Houlton ME 04730-2421 Fax: 532-5302**

**PRESQUE ISLE Region V Tel: 760-6300 TTY: 760-6312**  
**66 Spruce Street, Suite 3 Voice Only Toll Free: 1-800-635-0357**  
**Presque Isle ME 04769-3222 Fax: 760-6316**

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

### **MPower Adaptive Equipment Loan Program**

Through this state bond funded program, individuals and businesses can obtain low interest loans from \$250 up to \$100,000 to enable the acquisition of assistive technology or to improve access at home or at work. Individual may access the program in order to acquire items such as:

- Cars or Vans with hand controls and lifts
- Roll-in Showers
- Hearing aids
- Augmentative Communication Devices
- Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf- TTY
- Computers that speak aloud
- Wheelchair Lifts & Ramps
- Home Modifications, and
- Recreational Equipment (hand cycles, sports wheelchairs)

Businesses may access the resources in order to acquire items such as:

- Elevators & Lifts
- Building Modifications (Entrances, bathrooms, common areas)
- Worksite Adaptations for Employees, and
- Accessible Transit Vehicles

This program is jointly administered by Alpha One and the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME).



## CAREER EXPLORATION FORM

Job Title:

Name of Employer:

Address:

Contact Person:

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_

Education/Training Needed:

What are the worker traits you are looking for?

What are the main job duties?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Lifting Capacity?

- ☐ Sedentary
- ☐ Light
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Heavy

Job Conditions (check off as many as apply):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indoors             | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoors         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work mostly alone   | <input type="checkbox"/> Work with people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work with things    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time           | <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Close supervision   | <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited supervision |   |

What is your method of evaluation/performance review? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Over)

Do you ever consider trainees or on-the-job training?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

Starting salary: \$ \_\_\_\_\_/hour

Highest salary: \$ \_\_\_\_\_/hour

\_\_\_\_\_ Paid vacation

\_\_\_\_\_ Paid sick leave

\_\_\_\_\_ Medical Insurance

### Typical Hours

\_\_\_\_\_ Day Shift

\_\_\_\_\_ Weekend

\_\_\_\_\_ Afternoons

\_\_\_\_\_ Overtime

\_\_\_\_\_ Nights

Can you advise of other businesses to be contacted about this occupation?

Notes:

## INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT WORKSHEET

(May be completed by VR counselor or consumer)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing this form (if other than consumer):  
\_\_\_\_\_

### EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME/JOB GOAL

What is the specific job goal you plan to achieve?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are your reasons for choosing this goal?

Why is this a good choice for you, given your strengths, abilities, resources, interests and priorities? Describe any evidence that is available to show that this is a good choice.

What is the job market like for this goal? How did you learn about this?

### **QUALIFICATIONS TO ACHIEVE THE JOB GOAL**

What qualifications do you currently have for the job goal?

What qualifications do you need to further develop, in order to reach this goal?

**INTERMEDIATE STEPS/OBJECTIVES**

Are there any steps that must be accomplished before you can reach your job goal? If there are, describe:

How will your progress toward achieving these steps be evaluated?

**CONCERNS AND BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING THE JOB GOAL**

Are there any concerns, barriers or problems which must be resolved before you will be able to go to work (for example, losing Social Security or other benefits, transportation, child care, job accommodations, other issues concerning your disability, etc.)? If there are, describe:

Are there services that you will need in order to resolve these concerns, barriers or problems? If there are, describe the services that will be necessary:

**RESOURCES TO PAY FOR SERVICES NEEDED**

What are you able and willing to contribute to the cost of any services needed for your Individualized Plan for Employment?

What other resources may be helpful in paying for the services that you need? Describe availability of these resources.





