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Patrick Ryan  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor  
HOPe Consortium Conference | August 2021  

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a state agency within the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) that grows the state’s workforce of individuals with disabilities through individualized services.

The DVR mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to find a job, keep a job, or get a better job.
How is DVR Different from other Programs?

- Employment is based on individual strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
- We address the consumer’s disability throughout the DVR process. They must be willing to talk about their disability and work to overcome related barriers.
- DVR is not an immediate service. It takes time to plan and work through the process.

Role of the DVR Counselor

- Counseling-related Master’s Degree
- Professional Counseling License (LPC)
- Balance between case management and counseling
- Address disability issues
- Provide, arrange, and monitor services

DVR also has Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists, Financial Specialists, Business Services Consultants, and Managers

Workforce Development Areas (WDAs)

1. Southeast
2. Milwaukee
3. WOW Counties
4. Fox Valley
5. Bay Area
6. North Central
7. Northwest
8. West Central
9. Western
10. South Central
11. Southwest
DVR Partners

- Service Provider Network
- Statewide Network of Job Centers
- Other DWD Divisions and Programs
- Regional Workforce Development Areas
- Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council/VRNA
- Schools

DVR Business Services Consultants (BSCs)

DVR's 12 statewide BSCs offer:
- Employer Information and Support Services
  - Hiring Incentives, Labor Market Information
- Workforce Recruitment Assistance
  - Job Fair Facilitation, Customized Recruitment Events
- Labor Pool Assessment
  - Direct recruitment to DVR Talent Pool, Resume Collection
- Training Services
  - Customized Training, On-the-Job Training

What Does DVR Do?

- DVR is actively engaged with nearly 16,000 job seekers with disabilities who are working toward an employment goal
- There are roughly 900 DVR job seekers in WDA 9
- DVR job seekers develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with their DVR counselor, which defines:
  - The job goal
  - The services that are need to reach that goal
  - The job seeker’s role and responsibilities
Workforce Inclusion

• Nationwide, the employment rate for people with disabilities ages 18-64 is only 38.8 percent, versus 78.6 percent for people without disabilities

• Wisconsin ranks in the top 15 in the nation for employment of people with disabilities, with a statewide employment rate of 43.5 percent

(Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, 2020)

Disability Facts: Prevalence

• According to the CDC, 61 million Americans – or 1 in 4 U.S. adults – have a disability

(CDC, 2018)

• In 2019, 13.2 percent of the U.S. civilian population, or roughly 1 in 8 U.S. residents, had a disability

• Between 2009 and 2019, the number of individuals with disabilities in the U.S. increased by over 4.6 million people, an increase of 12 percent

(Annual Report on People with Disabilities in America, 2020)

Services

Each Plan for Employment is individualized. Services must be reasonable, necessary, and appropriate to help a consumer reach their job goal. Services include but are not limited to:

• Vocational Counseling
• Vocational Evaluation Services
• Job Shadow
• On-the-Job Assessment
• Job Development Services
• Supported Employment Services
• Customized Employment Services
Services

- Student Work Based Learning
- Explore Work
- Temporary Work Experiences
- On-The-Job Training (OJT)
- Skills Development
- Work Incentive Benefits Analysis
- Assistive Technology (AT)
- Short term transportation and clothing assistance

High school students with a disability should apply to DVR at least two years before completing high school.

For those under 18 or those over 18 who are not their own guardian, their legal guardian must sign all documents.

Referral to apply online, by mail, or in person.

Youth ages 14-24 may no longer go directly from school to subminimum wage employment, so students and families need to be informed of this change.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

- Signed into law July 22, 2014, to help Americans with disabilities find high-quality community employment with a focus on youth.
- Students leaving high school cannot be immediately placed into subminimum wage employment, they must first apply for DVR services.
WIOA established new definitions for:

- Students with disabilities – attending or enrolled in high school or an educational program, ages 14-21
- Youth with disabilities (ages 14-24)
- Per WIOA, schools are responsible for providing Pre-ETS in collaboration with DVR

Five service categories for Pre-ETS are now required:

1. Self Advocacy
2. Career Counseling
3. Post-secondary Counseling
4. Work-based Learning
5. Soft Skills

Who is eligible for DVR?

- Must have a documented medical or psychological disability that presents a barrier to employment and requires DVR services
- DVR staff will work with the applicant to:
  o Gather needed written documentation and information releases
  o Schedule a meeting to discuss the applicant’s disability/needs
  o Use existing information to the greatest extent possible (IEP, functional screen, previous medical records, etc.)
  o Refer the applicant for additional assessment if needed

What is Order of Selection (OOS)?

- OOS evaluates how a person’s disability affects seven different areas that relate to work:
  1. Mobility
  2. Communication
  3. Self-care
  4. Self-direction
  5. Interpersonal skills/acceptance
  6. Work tolerance
  7. Work skills
- As required by federal law, DVR serves those with the most serious limitations due to disability first
**OOS Categories**

DVR must serve those with the most significant disabilities first:

- **Category 1**: 4 or more serious limitations
- **Category 2**: 1 to 3 serious limitations
- **Category 3**: 0 serious limitations

*Note*: When DVR can work with an applicant, priority is given based on OOS category and application date.

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**What is an IPE?**

- An IPE is an Individualized Plan for Employment – not to be confused with an IEP (Individualized Education Program)!
- DVR helps consumers develop a plan to find a job, keep a job, or get a better job.

**Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)**

- Must be written within 90 days of receiving an open OOS category placement.
- Includes the following items:
  - Job Goal
  - Services
  - Progress Measures
  - Consumer’s Responsibilities
  - DVR’s Responsibilities
- The IPE will also address the disability and how DVR plans to accommodate any limitations.
End Goal: Integrated Employment

- “Most integrated setting” is now defined as:
  “…a setting that enables an individual to interact with persons without developmental disabilities to the fullest extent possible.”
  (§46.279(1)(bm) Wisconsin Statutes; emphasis added.).
- Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) - making no less than minimum wage

Thank You

- Apply online at: https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/referral/
- Find a counselor at: https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/about/staff-directory.pdf

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Collaboration History

- 1997 - Native American Initiative provided information to tribes on VR program and services.
- 1997 - Section 130 Grant Writing workshop in Wisconsin for the purpose of writing and receiving American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (AIVR) grants in Wisconsin.
- Four AIVR programs in Wisconsin: GLITC, Oneida, LCO, Menominee.
- 1998 - Two AIVR programs funded: Oneida, GLITC.
- 1999 - LCO funded; Menominee 2008.
- DVR assigns a VRC liaison with each Tribal VR program and tribe.
- Regular DVR staff office hours on reservations.

Collaborations

- DVR committed to continued and growing collaboration.
- 21-year history of collaboration.
- Formal cooperative agreements.
- DVR/AIVR joint cases and cost sharing. Consumers can choose Tribal VR, State VR, or joint case collaboration.
- AIVR Directors invited to DVR manager meetings 3 times each year.
- Staff participation and standing invitation to local DVR district staff meetings.
- AIVR VRC staff invited to the Statewide transition team for DVR.
Trainings

• 1990s - Native American cultural conferences/training for DVR staff.
• DVR/Tribal Innovation and Expansion grants for programs with tribal employers (REDI model).
• 1997 - DVR staff attendance at CANAR conferences.
• Annual joint trainings between DVR/AIVR staff, GLITC and LCO, Oneida and Menominee. TVR Circle Training on WIOA and its changes in 2014.
• WDA 7 worked with Red Cliff and Bad River on a summer youth program for Potentially Eligible and IPE consumers.
• WDA 5 worked with Oneida on a 16-week Pre-ETS training.

Collaboration Results

• Increased participation with tribal programs.
• Increased visitation with DVR liaison on the reservations.
• Increased collaboration with tribal VR counselors.
• Increased ability to serve Native youth and adults.
• Increased participation with Native youth and tribal schools.

Goals

• Build trust. Actions speak louder than words and cooperative agreement documents.
• Show up. Keep promises. Work through challenges and conflicts that may develop.
• Staff changes require ongoing commitment and relationship building.
• Increase closures and collaborations on shared cases.
DVR and VRNA Collaboration

- Case consults and sharing of information to better serve consumers.
- Sharing of training, resources, and service providers.
- Service coordination/plan development and funding.
- Outreach and job fairs.
- Summer Youth Program [see next slides].

Number of Students Served

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<th>2020</th>
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<td>51</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cliff</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
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2018
- Bad River – 1 DVR consumer with IPE
- Red Cliff – 2 DVR consumers with IPE: 1 Promise consumer
- 17 work permits paid at cost of $10 each

2019
- Bad River – 25 Returning Students
- Red Cliff – 4 DVR consumers with IPE
- 24 new work permits

2020
- 21 returned for a second year
- 6 returned for a third year
- 1 DVR consumer
- 4 were DVR consumers in 2019
- 19 new work permits provided

DVR and VRNA Roles

Recruitment
- Attended recruitment activities at each Reservation or school to recruit students.
- Worked with a third party to ensure work permits were completed for students under 16.

Potentially Eligible
- Schools contacted and assisted with Potentially Eligible form where students attended school.
- Worked with Home School coordinators to assist with those students.
DVR and VRNA Roles (Cont.)

Work Sites
- Educated work site supervisors and students on payroll and time sheets.
- Monitor and follow up with students and sites.

Transportation
- VRNA provided bus passes and gas vouchers to parents and students who did not have access to transportation.

Worksite Locations

Bad River Reservation
- Family Human Services
- Youth Center or Elderly
- Earth Partnership
- Bad River Clinic
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Red Cliff Reservation
- Legendary Waters Resort
- Marina Campground
- Department of Natural Resources
- Police Department
- Tribal Preservation Department
- Administration Building

What Tribal Leadership is Saying

“The Bad River-DVR/VRNA partnership offered Bad River youth a unique opportunity to learn job skills through culturally responsive summer youth programming in their own community. It was an exceptional learning experience which actually empowered youth to make more informed choices about educational and career options. Feedback from students was overwhelmingly positive."

- Dee Gokee-Rindal, HR Manager, Tribal Operations Manager
  Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians
What Tribal Leadership is Saying

“The experience was great and glad to have the opportunity to collaborate with Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development - VRNA, Ashland CEP and GUTC-VRNA Programs to bring such a wonderful learning Youth Employment program to Red Cliff and the Community. Having a program for our Youth here in Red Cliff is a needed thing as employment opportunities in this area are scarce and have declined over the years for youth.”

-- Nathan Gordon, Red Cliff Vice Chairman

What Parents are Saying

“I would just like to say that the summer youth program helped my son to learn the value of hard work and budgeting. When he started the program, he was very enthusiastic about learning how to work as a team and how it incorporated our culture. From building and caring for our environment to having fun at the same time. He was very careful as to his needs; so he did learn the value of the dollar. If he didn’t need it, he didn’t buy it.”

“The bus passes helped my child a lot with getting to and from the community center each day! Thanks.”

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