

Description of the IPE

The IPE is a written plan outlining a participant's vocational goal, and the services to be provided to reach the goal. The IPE formalizes the planning process through which the vocational goal, service delivery and time frames for service delivery are determined and provides a plan for monitoring progress toward achievement of the goal. Through the IPE, participants are informed of their rights and responsibilities in the VR process.

Consistent with the intent of the Workforce Opportunity and Employment Act (WIOA) and the federal VR regulations, the IPE must be designed to achieve a specific employment outcome that is selected by the participant consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

The participant's involvement in developing the plan is reflected throughout the IPE. The IPE must be agreed upon and signed by the participant, the VR counselor, and a supervisor.

Information regarding the IPE and options for developing the IPE is included in the VR Handbook and should be discussed with the applicant during the intake process.

Timeframe for Developing an IPE

1. An IPE will be developed with every individual who is eligible for VR services as soon as possible but no later than 90 days after they have been determined eligible for VR services, unless the VR counselor and participant agree to an extension of that timeframe. If an extension is warranted and agreed upon, a new date for completion must be identified and documented in the case record using the Extension of IPE Implementation Agreement form.
2. IPEs must also be developed for students who are eligible for services, within 90 days after they have been determined eligible for VR services. However, if the student will be leaving the school setting before the 90-day timeframe, the IPE must be developed by the time the student leaves the school setting.

Developing the IPE

The following general principles must be applied as the IPE is developed.

Options for Developing the IPE – There are several options a participant can use when developing an IPE. They can work with their VR counselor to develop their IPE.

They can also request assistance from a relative or friend, an organization or agency that assists people with disabilities, staff at a career center, a teacher or counselor, a representative of the Client Assistance Program or they can develop their IPE on their own. Regardless of how the IPE is developed, it must be reviewed and approved by the NYSCB VR counselor and their supervisor before it is finalized and ready for implementation. When the IPE is developed with the VR counselor, it should be done during a face-to-face meeting. When that is not possible, for example in a job-save situation, the IPE can be developed without a face-to-face meeting. The reason for not having the face-to-face meeting should be documented in the case record.

Use of Interpreters - For participants who communicate through sign language, a certified interpreter must be present if the IPE is being developed by the VR counselor and the participant. This procedure should be followed regardless of the VR counselor's signing skills, unless the VR counselor is a VR counselor (Manual Communication). VR counselors in this title are required to demonstrate a level of proficiency in manual sign language which will allow them to perform the job satisfactorily. During the development of the IPE, the VR counselor should stop frequently to check for the participant's understanding and confirm that understanding through the interpreter.

For participants who do not speak English, NYSCB can provide free foreign language interpreting to enable the participant to be fully involved in the development of their IPE. If a participant declines the free OCFS-interpretation assistance during an in-person encounter such as IPE development, the New York State Waiver of Right to Free Interpretation form must be completed.

Basis for the IPE - The IPE must be based on an assessment carried out in the most individualized and integrated setting, consistent with the informed choice of the participant.

Provision of Services - VR services should be provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service and consistent with the informed choice of the participant. If the IPE provides for services in a non-integrated setting, a justification to support the non-integrated setting should be documented in the case record.

When developing an IPE for a participant who is already working, the employer's responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities should be considered when determining services/equipment to be provided by NYSCB.

Informing Participants of Options - The VR counselor should discuss the various options available to the participant throughout the process of developing the IPE. This enables the participant to make informed decisions about their employment goals, services, service providers and the methods used to provide or procure services. Specifically, participants who receive SSI or SSDI must be provided with general information on additional supports and assistance (e.g., self-directed savings plans) for

individuals with disabilities entering the work force including assistance with benefits planning. See Chapter 11.00, Comparable Service and Benefits, for additional information.

Annual Review - The IPE must be reviewed with the participant, or as appropriate, their authorized representative at least annually. Amendments resulting from the annual review may not take effect until agreed to and signed by the participant.

Accessible Language and Format - A copy of the IPE and its amendments must be provided to the participant or, as appropriate, their authorized representative. The IPE should be provided in the participant's preferred format (including large print, braille, or email), or to the extent possible, in the native language of the participant or as appropriate, their authorized representative. A copy of the completed signature page should be attached to the IPE.

Contents of the IPE

The IPE contains the following:

1. The employment goal
2. Objectives associated with achievement of the goal
3. Participant and VR counselor responsibilities
4. The specific rehabilitation services to be provided
5. The service providers and the process used to provide or procure services
6. The projected dates for initiation of the services and the anticipated duration of each service
7. Criteria to be used to determine progress toward achieving the employment goal
8. The participant's rights and responsibilities including the right to appeal a decision through an administrative review, mediation or administrative hearing
9. A description of the availability of the local Client Assistance Program
10. An assessment of the anticipated need for post-employment services
11. A listing of comparable benefits available to the participant or the participant's

12. If appropriate, information regarding the participant's need for rehabilitation technology, specific on-the-job services and related personal assistance services
13. Additional requirements apply for participants receiving supported employment services. See Section 12.02, Supported Employment

Preparing an IPE

Follow this procedure to complete the IPE:

1. Select the IPE from the list of available forms in the case record.
2. Select the appropriate Type of Plan from the pick list.
3. Select the appropriate goal from the pick list comprised of the O*NET database of job titles

Guidance for Selecting an Employment Goal

When selecting a goal many factors should be considered including but not limited to the following:

- a. Availability of employment
- b. Occupational requirements
- c. Medical factors
- d. The participant's previous work history, interests, abilities and capabilities and willingness to relocate

The selection of the goal should be based on an assessment of VR needs including, where appropriate, situational assessments. See Chapter 3.00, Assessments and Evaluations During the VR Process, for additional information regarding assessing the nature and scope of services.

The employment goal must be based, primarily, on the participant's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities (e.g., primary employment factors). The employment goal also must reflect the participant's interest and informed choice to the extent that those factors are consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities and capabilities. Factors such as the local economy or local labor market conditions (e.g., job availability in the community) are external factors that may be considered but cannot alone determine whether the employment goal is appropriate. These considerations apply to employment goals for both participants who are not currently employed and those who are seeking to

advance in their present careers.

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4. Enter the **objectives, specific services, the service providers, the start and end dates for each service, the participants responsibilities associated with each service, NYSCB's responsibilities and the way the participant's success will be measured.** Vocational Counseling and Guidance provided by NYSCB is preprinted on the IPE form. If Orientation and Mobility and/or Vision Rehabilitation Therapy is to be provided by NYSCB staff, those services should also be entered on the IPE with NYSCB as the provider. For transition students or youth, include the specific transition services and supports needed to achieve the employment outcome. The dates of service, measurement of success and my responsibilities boxes will need to be completed. CIS includes pick lists for the participant and VR counselor responsibilities and for progress evaluation criteria. VR counselors can enter their own text or select from the pick lists.
5. Review **Your Responsibilities** with the participant.
6. Review the **VR counselor Responsibilities** with the participant.
7. Review the **Participant's Rights** regarding confidentiality, the availability of the appeals process and the Client Assistance Program with the participant. Confirmation of this discussion should be documented in a case note in the participant's case record.
8. Review the statement regarding the availability of **Future Services** (post-employment services).
9. Review the "**Signatures**" section and obtain the participant's signature. Explain that the IPE is not finalized until it is approved and signed by the VR counselor's supervisor. If the IPE includes graduate school training and/or a home modification, the VR counselor should explain that the IPE must also be approved and signed by the district manager.
10. **Sign and date** the IPE. This triggers an email notification to the VR counselor's supervisor letting them know an IPE is ready to be signed. When the supervisor signs the IPE an email notification is sent to the VR counselor. The VR counselor can now enter the participant signature date in if the participant has agreed to the IPE.

If changes are recommended by the VR counselor's supervisor, the VR counselor will contact the participant to discuss the changes prior to sending them a copy of the signed IPE as noted in Step 11. See Chapter 6.00, Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), for additional information.

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11. Provide a copy of the signed IPE to the participant in their preferred format.
12. Indicate the date that the IPE was given or sent to the participant and document the format in which it was provided in the case record.
13. Scan and attach the signature page to the participant's IPE in the case record.

Participant's Signature on the IPE

The Rehabilitation Act specifically states that the IPE is to be jointly agreed upon and signed by the participant (or authorized representative) and the VR counselor. If the participant refuses to sign the IPE and disagrees with the IPE, no viable plan is in effect. The reasons for the refusal should be discussed and documented in a case note. The VR counselor and participant should attempt to resolve the issue(s) and redevelop the IPE.

If the issue(s) cannot be resolved and the participant and VR counselor cannot agree upon an IPE, the VR counselor should advise the participant of the appeals process and of the availability of assistance through the Client Assistance Program (CAP). If no resolution is possible, the VR counselor should advise the participant that their case will be closed.

Annual IPE Reviews

The IPE can be reviewed as often as determined necessary; however, it must be reviewed at least annually. During the annual review, the participant and the VR counselor review the entire IPE and jointly redevelop the IPE as needed.

The annual review is to be conducted during a face-to-face meeting between the VR counselor and the participant. When this is not possible, the annual review can take place without a face-to-face meeting. The reason for not having a face-to-face meeting must be documented in the case record. If the participant has a representative, the representative should also attend the annual IPE review meeting.

If an unscheduled review of the entire IPE takes place prior to the date of the scheduled annual review, the next annual review can be set for one year from the date the unscheduled review took place.

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Documenting the Annual Review

The annual review of the IPE should be documented in a case note using the description "IPE Annual Review." Doing so will remove the case from the "IPE Annual Review" section of the Next Action PDQ.

If during the annual review there is no longer agreement on an IPE, follow the instructions in the "IPE Amendments" section below.

IPE Amendments

An IPE is amended if there are substantive changes in the employment outcome, in the VR services to be provided or in the providers of the VR services.

When a participant receiving services under an approved IPE chooses to pursue a different vocational goal, the existing IPE will be reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the services on the IPE. If an amended IPE with a new vocational goal is being developed, the participant's case can remain in Status 18. If there is no agreement on a new goal and services are not continuing, the case should be moved to Status 24 until a new IPE is ready to be developed or the case is ready for closure.

A case note should be entered into the participant's case record documenting the current circumstances, the plans for re-developing the IPE or the reason for moving the case to Status 24. Amended IPEs must be signed by the VR counselor, supervisor and the participant prior to implementation of the changes.