

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Program Name: Vocational Rehabilitation

Policy Number: VR-2.10-v1

Effective Date: September 30, 2021

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CHAPTER 2: Client Information and Case Requirements

Section 2.10: Case Notes

I. Policy Statement

This policy provides the guidelines for VR staff regarding effective case notes that are appropriate, understandable, and meet the documentation and verification requirements for the VR program. Case notes are electronic and chronological records of events, interactions and observations of a case and are used for case management, appeals and professional reviews.

II. Authority

Authority for policies contained in this document includes the following:

- Internal VR policy

III. Applicability

This policy applies for all VR cases.

IV. Standards

- A. Vocational counseling and guidance (VCG) must be recorded in the form of case notes or narratives that provide a running history of the case development and progress.
- B. The VR Counselor must enter a case note within 2 business days of the event.
- C. The VR Counselor must document all VCG activities in a case note detailing the appointment or discussion under the topic heading "Vocational Counseling and Guidance" in the ECF.
- D. VR staff must exercise professional judgment and discretion when writing case notes and keep only relevant information as the case record may be reviewed by other parties or entered into evidence in an appeal or legal proceeding.
- E. Well written and complete case notes that provide accurate, objective information grounded in fact and evidence must include:
 1. Facts and information relevant to the case addressing who, what, when, why, where, and how,

2. Date and type of contact with the applicant/client (e.g., phone, in person, etc.),
 3. A brief description of what occurred (e.g., decision made, client reported progress, counseling and guidance occurred, information requested, etc.) and the next step to be taken by either party,
 4. A description of the decision-making process and the active roles of each party in deciding the outcome, and
 5. A description of the quality of the applicant/client's interaction and involvement in the VR process as evidence of informed choice.
- F. In support of any RSA Decision Letter, the VR Counselor's documentation must:
1. Be specific when dealing with substantive issues needing resolution.
 2. Identify the issue and indicate the manner in which the applicant/client was informed and involved in the process of identifying a solution.
 3. Outline relevant events, activities, and the rationale for their decisions promptly, so it is clear what was decided and when it was decided.
- G. Information and support for a decision made by the VR Counselor must be sufficient to show that the decision is:
1. Reasonable,
 2. Based on adequate fact,
 3. Considerate of the applicant/client's circumstances, and
 4. Reached with correct application of policy, procedures, rules, and regulations.
- H. The following must not be in a case note or narrative:
1. Judgmental, derogatory, or subjective statements, medical or psychological labels, and innuendoes.
 2. Critical comments about other agency personnel or procedures or philosophical discourses.
 3. Details or an entire email content of an internal agency discussion or team collaboration (e.g., an email from the Attorney General, program supervisor, policy unit, etc.) regarding the coordination or direction of the client's VR program and services. These may be summarized in a case note in reference to only relevant information with a clear purpose or intent.
 4. Comments that are not relevant to the applicant/ client's disability or VR needs.
 5. Duplicate information that can otherwise be cited or referenced to elsewhere in the ECF unless necessary to describe a specific issue. All

narrative and justification templates are exempt from duplicate information and must not reference to documents elsewhere in the ECF.

6. Incomplete wording such as text language, acronyms, and abbreviations. Statewide commonly understood acronyms that are not specific to one office or community are acceptable (e.g., VR, SSDI, SSI, etc.).

V. Procedure

- A. Refer to IV.B-H above.
- B. Refer to Standard Work, if available.

VI. Documentation Requirements

- A. Each VCG case note must be entered under the topic heading “Vocational Counseling and Guidance” as per guidelines listed in Section IV above.