

## **ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY**

**Program Name:** Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

**Policy Number:** VR-1.5-v1

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2008

**Last Revision:** March 31, 2021

**CHAPTER 7:** Introduction

**Section 1.5:** Informed Choice

### **I. Policy Statement**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to applicants/clients and their parent or legal guardian regarding informed choice throughout the VR process.

Applicants or clients of the VR program must be provided with information and support to assist in exercising informed choice in the selection services, service providers, and methods of procuring services when choices are available.

### **II. Authority**

Authority for policies contained in this document includes the following:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), 29 U.S.C. § 3101 et seq.
- Title IV Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, 34 C.F.R. § Informed Choice 361.52
- A.R.S. §§ 23-502 and 503
- Arizona Administrative Code, Title 6, Chapter 4
  - Diagnostic Study R6-4-203 (C)

### **III. Applicability**

This applies to circumstances when applicants or clients must utilize informed choice to make decisions regarding their participation in the VR program.

### **IV. Standards**

- A. VR must support the informed choice process by providing counseling and guidance, information, and support to help applicants or clients involved in VR services make choices that match their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests.

- B. The VR Counselor must provide applicants or clients with:
  - 1. A list of available providers and services throughout the rehabilitation process.
  - 2. Assistance in identifying and locating information needed to explore available options.
  - 3. Information and referral to community supports and relevant consumer groups that can assist the applicant/client in making informed choices.
  - 4. Help the applicant/client understand and evaluate the options available to them, including assisting with arrangement of phone calls, meetings and tours between the client and available service providers.
- C. The VR Counselor must provide the following information to assist applicants or clients of the VR program in practicing informed choice when choosing services and service providers:
  - 1. Types of services offered from the potential provider,
  - 2. Cost, accessibility, and duration of potential service,
  - 3. Qualifications of potential service provider,
  - 4. Degree to which services are provided in an integrated setting, and
  - 5. Outcomes achieved by applicants or clients working with service providers, if available.
- D. Cost considerations for services not contingent on economic need, when practicing informed choice, apply only to the following services:
  - 1. Assessments,
  - 2. Vocational Counseling and Guidance,
  - 3. Information and referral services,
  - 4. Job-related services,
  - 5. Personal assistance services, and
  - 6. Auxiliary aid or services which require a client to participate in the VR program.
- E. VR and all service providers will follow all applicable federal, state, DES, and VR policies – refer to Section 7.5 Procurement of Services and Exceptions for more information in authorizing and invoicing selected services through informed choice.
- F. Selected services, service providers and method of procuring services must:

1. Be made in accordance with applicable federal, state, Department of Economic Security, and VR policies and procedures,
  2. Be necessary to determine eligibility, assess rehabilitation needs, and/or achieve the specific employment outcome as identified in the most current approved IPE, and
  3. Be agreed upon by the applicant or client of the VR program and staff.
- G. Services selected through informed choice must be necessary to determine eligibility, assess rehabilitation needs, and/or achieve the specific employment outcome as identified in the most current approved IPE.
- H. The VR Counselor and applicant/client must agree on the chosen service prior to moving forward with the rehabilitation process.
- I. VR will pay for the lowest cost service option that meets the client's disability related needs and/or approved to participate in a non-contracted service in which the provider sets their own rates (i.e. college).
- J. In instances when the applicant or client chooses the higher cost service for reasons unrelated to their disability and/or specific employment outcome, the applicant or client is responsible for those costs that are more than the lowest cost service.

**V. Procedure**

- A. Refer to section IV, A-B, H, and J above.
- B. Refer to Standard Work (if applicable)

**VI. Documentation Requirements**

The client's electronic case file must include the following:

- A. Confirmation that informed choice was provided to client/client representative in all IPE and IPE amendment justification templates.