

# ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

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

**Policy Number:** VR-1.5-v2

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2008

**Last Revision:** October 25, 2024

**CHAPTER 1:** Introduction

**Section 1.5:** Informed Choice

## I. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the guidelines for assisting an applicant, client, or legal guardian in exercising informed choice throughout the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) process.

## 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 CFR 361.52, Informed Choice.
- Arizona Revised Statutes:
  - § 23-502, and
  - § 23-503.
- Arizona Administrative Code, Title 6, Chapter 4, R6-4-203 (C), Diagnostic Study.

## III. Applicability

- A. This policy applies to applicants/clients participating in the vocational rehabilitation process.

## IV. Standards

- A. Informed choice is the process through which an applicant/client obtains enough information about the available options, and understands the advantages and disadvantages of each option, including the limitations of VR, to make decisions about their VR case.

- B. An applicant's/client's representative can assist the applicant/client to make an informed choice, but cannot make decisions for the applicant/client.
- C. Services selected through informed choice must be necessary to determine eligibility, assess rehabilitation needs, and achieve the specific employment outcome as identified in the most current, approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
- D. VR must support the informed choice process by providing vocational counseling and guidance, information, and support to help applicants/clients participating in VR services make choices that match their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests.
- E. The VR Counselor must provide the following to applicants/clients throughout their VR case:
  - 1. Information about necessary services required to achieve the specific employment outcome, including:
    - a. A list of available providers,
    - b. The types of services offered by the potential provider,
    - c. The cost, accessibility, and duration of the potential service,
    - d. The qualifications of the potential service provider,
    - e. The degree to which services are provided in an integrated setting, and
    - f. The outcomes achieved by applicants or clients working with service providers, if available.
  - 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. Assistance in understanding and evaluating the options available to them, including assisting with the arrangement of phone calls, meetings, and service provider facility tours between the applicant/client and available service providers.
- F. The selection of services, service providers, and the method of procuring services must:

1. Be made following applicable federal, State, Department of Economic Security (DES), 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/client and the VR Counselor.
- G. VR and all service providers will follow all applicable federal, State, DES, and VR policies. Refer to Section 7.4 Procurement of Services and Exceptions for more information on authorizing and invoicing selected services through informed choice.
- H. The VR Counselor and applicant/client must agree on the chosen service before moving forward with the rehabilitation process.
- I. VR will pay for the lowest-cost service option that meets the client's disability-related needs.
- J. In instances when the applicant or client chooses the higher-cost service option for reasons unrelated to their disability or specific employment outcome, the applicant or client is responsible for the cost difference between the lowest-cost service option and the higher-cost service option. This applies to services that are contingent on economic need.

**V. Procedure**

- A. Refer to Standards in section IV. D, E, G, and J above.
- B. Refer to Standard Work, if available.

**VI. Documentation Requirements**

- A. The client's electronic case file must include confirmation that informed choice was provided to an applicant/client or their legal guardian in all IPE and IPE amendment justification templates.