

Partnering with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) To Create an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

Start here with this two-page overview. Follow links or read through the entire guide to learn more. This guide includes general information and information about DVR that is specific to Colorado. If you are outside of Colorado, check with your state or local DVR office for information specific to your location.

If your answer is yes to the following two questions, then an IPE might be for you:

- Are you interested in building your career path after high school?
- Do you need any specific services related to a disability to meet your employment goals?

You can apply for DVR services while still in school. If you are [eligible for services](#), **DVR can help you find a job, keep your job, or get a better job.** The process takes time. Also, at times, there may be a [waitlist](#) for services. The best time to begin the process is before you leave high school, but if you are out of high school, it is not too late.

Also, while you are in high school, you can receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) without an eligibility determination or an IPE. For more information on Pre-ETS in your area, check with your school or DVR partner. The Colorado DVR website has more detailed information on [Youth Services](#), including Pre-ETS.

The plan to help you achieve your work goal is called an **Individualized Plan for Employment or IPE.**

- An IPE is an agreement between YOU and DVR.
- An IPE is a written plan for you to work toward your job goal.
- An IPE outlines the specific services that are necessary and appropriate to reach your job goal, the expected timeline to begin and end services, information on who will provide services, how progress toward your job goal will be measured, and a description of everyone's responsibilities.
- Some services will be provided at no cost to you. Others may require you to pay or contribute. This depends on your personal circumstances.
- Goods and services provided by DVR must be necessary, appropriate, and the least possible cost.

To start the IPE process:

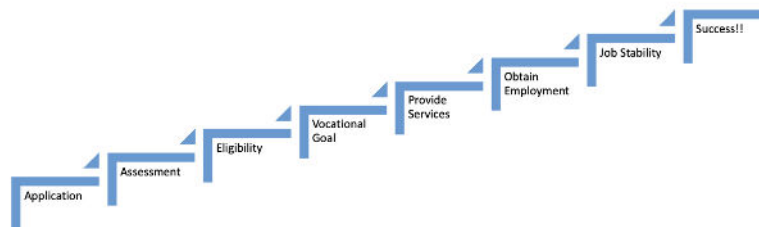
1. [Contact your DVR office](#) to schedule an appointment with a DVR partner.
2. [Prepare for your first appointment.](#)
3. [Think about your job goal and your “why.”](#)
4. [Learn more about what an IPE](#) is and isn't.

When you work with DVR, **informed choice** is an important part of the process. This means that you are given information about the options available to you, and you should be participating fully in the process. Making informed choices does not mean that you can choose anything you want. You must work with the options that are available through DVR and follow the DVR requirements.

More information about the DVR process can be found in the [Colorado DVR Services Handbook](#). The [DVR Roadmap \(download\)](#) shown below gives a visual of the steps in the process.



The DVR Roadmap



Keep reading for more detailed information on partnering with DVR to develop an IPE.

If you have any questions related to this guide or about transition from high school, please contact a parent advisor PEAK Parent Center at parentadvisor@peakparent.org.

Disclaimer: Project Power, a project of PEAK Parent Center, Inc., is reported by the US Department of Education's Rehabilitation Service Administration. The contents of this resource were developed under a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Education (H235F230006). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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To get started with the IPE process:

Contact your DVR Office

DVR may have a representative who works with your school. Check with your teacher or transition advisor.

[Map of DVR Offices](#)

You can also fill out an [DVR Interest & Referral Form](#).

Prepare for your appointment

Check DVR's website information on [what you should expect at your first appointment](#) (scroll down to the middle of the page on the DVR website) and the list of important items to bring. These items are also summarized below.

You will need to complete a "Referral for Pre-Employment Transition Services Form" or an "Applicant Information Form" (only one of these is needed and you will get the form you need from DVR staff).

Other helpful information for your meeting:

- A copy of your Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan and/or Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) from your high school.
- Copies of recent medical or psychological evaluations.
- Proof of disability benefits, including SSI or SSDI award letter (if applicable).
- A copy of guardianship paperwork (if applicable).
- A resume or a summary of any volunteer or work history.
- Any information that you want DVR to know about your skills, interests and community involvement.

If you are eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), you are presumed to be eligible for DVR services.

Supported Employment. [Supported Employment](#), for eligible individuals, offers work support services if you need intensive ongoing support in the work setting. Services

include assessing and identifying interests and abilities, job placement and development, and job coaching. If you get Supported Employment services, you must first use the services through DVR or speak with a Community Centered Board (CCB) Case Manager.

If you are eligible for Supported Employment, you may want to meet some job coaches before your meeting with DVR to see if there is someone you would like to work with. You may find a job coach through a Program Approved Service Agency (PASA), an agency that has been approved to provide direct community-based services to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities approved for Medicaid waiver services. Ask to make sure that the job coach or PASA is also a service provider with DVR.

Waitlist. Depending on the timing of your application, you may be placed on a waitlist if there are not enough available resources to serve all eligible individuals at that time. If you are determined eligible, you will be placed into an “order of selection” priority category. The order of selection categories are:

1. People who have the most significant disabilities.
2. People with significant disabilities.
3. All other people with disabilities.

Within these categories, people will be served in the order that their completed applications are received.

Think about your job goal and your “why”

Knowing what is important to you in a job setting, what types of jobs you are interested in, and what local opportunities there are can make the process more effective. Here are some questions to consider:

- What careers and jobs relate to your interests?
- Where do you want to be employed and why?
- What is your current skill set?
- What additional training or skills do you need?
- What do you need to be successful in a workplace setting?
- What obstacles or challenges might make it harder to achieve your employment goal?
- What motivates you to keep working?

There are many [online career planning resources](#) for thinking about your career path and what your next step should be. Find one that works for you to build self awareness and understanding of your options.

If you aren't sure what you want to do:

- Learn about different types of jobs.
- Learn about job opportunities in your area.
- Set up informational interviews.
- Find out about school to work initiatives that are available in your area. Your school or DVR partner should be able to help you find this information.
- DVR can help with exploration.

Here are some resources to help understand the Colorado job market:

[Most Advertised Jobs in Colorado](#)

[Colorado Springs Workforce Asset Map](#)

Specific job listings and other assistance can be found at [Colorado Workforce Centers](#).

Many jobs are found through personal connections. Talk to people you know about what you are interested in.

Getting Started with the IPE

- IPE stands for Individualized Plan for Employment.
- An IPE is an agreement between YOU and DVR,
- An IPE is a written plan for working toward a JOB GOAL.
- Here is an [Example of the IPE template](#).
- More information about the DVR process can be found in the [Colorado DVR Services Handbook](#).
- The PACER Center has also created an [informational video about the IPE](#).
- While every IPE will be different, here is an example of an [IPE for a high school student](#).

Eligibility for an IPE

You must be found eligible to have an IPE and to receive the services outlined in the IPE through DVR. This means that DVR must determine that:

- You have a documentable disability – such as a physical, mental or learning disability, and
- Your disability creates problems with you getting or keeping a job, and
- You need DVR services in order to work successfully.

DVR has up to 60 days to make your eligibility determination after you submit your signed application.

Writing the IPE

You can write your own IPE or work on it with others. Some people who can help include:

- Your DVR partner
- A vocational counselor who does not work with DVR
- Your parent, guardian or representative

What does an IPE include?

The IPE includes general information, including your employment goal and the timeline for services, information on services, including a description of what services are needed, who will provide them and how they will be measured, a statement of DVR's responsibilities and your responsibilities, and information about your rights.

- Employment Goal
 - The goal should match your interests, strengths, needs and abilities.
 - The goal can be broad or more specific depending on your needs and interests.
 - Here are a few examples of employment goals:
 - To gain knowledge and functional skills required for employment as a _____.(fill in the blank).
 - To work as a certified nursing assistant.
 - To work in the hospitality industry.
 - To become a teacher or a paraprofessional.
 - To work as a cyber security analyst.
 - Questions to consider:
 - Are there minimum standards for the employment goal?
 - Is training required? If so, what type of training?
 - Does the local labor market support this type of employment goal?
 - If not, are you willing to relocate?
- Refining your Employment Goal
 - You might start with a “dream goal,” but then work to find a related occupation that may be a better first step or have a better labor market in your area.
 - For example, you may have the goal of becoming a Videogame Designer, but you learn that the job requires considerable preparation and skills that you do not have. As a step to gain relevant experience, you might look for a job that builds programming skills.

- Timelines
 - The IPE will give a timeline for when services will begin and when the IPE is expected to be completed. This will depend on what is in your IPE, but will be a minimum of 90 days.

- Services
 - The IPE will describe the what and the why of each service.
 - Some services are provided at no cost to you. Others may require that you pay or use other sources of payment first. See “[Who Pays for the Goods or Services](#)” below.
 - DVR may refer you to other agencies for some needed services.
 - DVR does not provide funding for personal living expenses.
 - Goods and services that are provided by DVR must be:
 - **Necessary**
 - **Appropriate**
 - **Least Possible Cost**
 - Examples of services that may be provided without cost:
 - Assessments to determine eligibility and needs.
 - Vocational Counseling and guidance.
 - Referral services.
 - Job search assistance
 - Job coaching
 - On-the-job training support
 - Interpreter services
 - Examples of services you may need to pay or help pay for:
 - Training or education
 - Assistive technology
 - Books, supplies, tools, equipment

- Description of the provider of services
 - Will the service be provided by DVR or a vendor?
 - Will the service be provided by another agency or educational institution?

- Measures of Progress
 - The IPE will describe what is being measured for each service, including who will measure and when it will take place.

- DVR’s Responsibilities
 - Monitoring how your IPE is going.
 - Working with you to solve problems with your IPE.

- Helping you get a job.
- Your Responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, if applicable. These responsibilities include:
 - Maintaining communication with DVR throughout the process and, as needed, after your IPE is completed.
 - Participation in the implementation of your IPE.
 - Notifying DVR of certain changes and other arrangements.
 - Attending meetings and appointments.

Who provides goods and services?

DVR works with a number of partners and vendors throughout the state to provide services and goods to assist people with disabilities to achieve their goal of successful employment.

Who pays for the goods and services?

Some services provided by DVR (or a vendor) such as vocational counseling and guidance are free. DVR may pay for other services depending on your ability to pay (or your family's ability to pay). DVR will also require that you use other sources of funding, such as Medicaid, DD funding or financial aid for post-secondary education, first.

DVR uses a Financial Needs Analysis (FNA) form to identify the amount, if any, that you must contribute towards the cost of your VR goods and services. You can find out more from your DVR partner.

Individuals who are currently eligible for SSI and/or SSDI benefits due to disability or blindness are exempt from financial contribution.

DVR must buy services and goods at the **lowest possible cost** to meet your needs and follow the DVR Policy and Fee Schedule. If you select an item or service that costs more than what DVR can pay, you will be responsible for the extra cost.

Be aware that the financial needs analysis (FNA) varies from state to state.

Informed Choice

All activities related to your IPE should be consistent with the principles of “respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of meaningful careers, based on **informed choice**.” You should be given all relevant and available information that you need to make your decisions.

- Here are some examples of informed choice at different points in the process:
 - After learning about the process and options, you can choose to move forward with application or to not to work with DVR at that time.
 - After discussing the timetable for DVR services, you can decide that you want to look for employment on your own to try to get a job sooner.
 - After learning about the available options for service providers, you can choose which one you want to work with.
 - After discussing the pros and cons of an employment opportunity, you can choose whether you want to accept or decline the opportunity.

You can change your IPE

You have the right to review your IPE at any time and to ask for changes to your planned employment goal, services, providers, and how your vocational rehabilitation services are provided.

- Your IPE must be reviewed at least annually
- Your IPE must be amended if there are changes to:
 - Your Employment Goal
 - Your VR services
 - Your VR service providers
- Amendments must be agreed to by you and your DVR partner

How long does the IPE last?

Once you and your DVR partner agree that your job outcome is satisfactory and you are performing well, your case will be closed. This will mean that you have achieved and maintained your employment outcome for at least 90 days. Even after your case is closed, you may reapply at a later point if additional services are needed to retain your employment.

Although you may reapply, DVR does not provide ongoing, long-term employment support. You may be able to receive long-term employment support through your Community Centered Board (CCB).

Coordination with Community Centered Boards (CCBs)

DVR works closely with schools and Community Centered Boards to support eligible students and youth to make the most of their school years and achieve their employment goals.

How can families support the IPE process?

Your IPE is an agreement between YOU and DVR, and you are responsible for your part of the agreement. You should be driving the process, but the support of family members and others can help you achieve your goals. [Information for family members](#).

What if I have questions about my rights related to my IPE?

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) at Disability Law Colorado assists people with issues they have with DVR.

[Disability Law Colorado DVR Fact Sheet](#)

Additional Resources about DVR in Colorado:

[Colorado DVR Policy Manual](#)

Additional General Resources about DVR:

[RAISE Center DVR Toolkit](#)

[Transition Discoveries: Office of VR](#)

Online Career Planning Resources:

Keep in mind that people you know are often the best sources of information about careers. There are also many online resources available for career planning and exploration. Here are a few examples of some you can use on your own. The important thing is to find a tool that works for you and use it.

Resources for Youth:

[Young Adults in Transition: Vocational Rehabilitation Services](#) (RAISE Center)

General Information on Employment:

[WINTAC Resources: Workplace Readiness Training](#)

[Transition Discoveries: Employment](#)

[NACT:C: Employment](#)

Workplace Accommodations:

[Job Accommodation Network](#)

Interest Surveys:

[Truity Photo Career Quiz](#)

[Truity Type Finder for Career Planning](#)

Career Exploration:

[Explore Work](#)

[Explore Careers | CareerOneStop](#)
[O*Net Research Careers by Work Style](#)
[O*Net Research Careers by Work Values](#)
[Career Spotlight Videos](#)

Apprenticeship Information:
[Apprenticeship.Gov](#)

Colorado Resources:
[Disability Law Colorado Transition Series - Employment](#)
[Colorado Office of Employment First Career Exploration Resources](#)
[My Colorado Journey](#)
[Colorado Labor Market Information](#)
[Colorado Springs Workforce Asset Map](#)
[Colorado Office of Employment First Career Exploration Resources](#)
[Colorado Apprenticeship Programs](#)
[CareerWise Colorado Participating Districts](#)

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