

**MISSOURI REHABILITATION
SERVICES FOR THE BLIND**



**Consumer Handbook
Vocational Rehabilitation**

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CONSUMER HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

What is Vocational Rehabilitation?.....	2
Who can receive VR services?.....	2
How do I get in touch with RSB?.....	3
How do I prepare for my first interview?.....	3
How does my rehabilitation begin?.....	4
How do I learn if I'm eligible for services?.....	5
Now that I'm eligible, what happens next?.....	5
RSB Services.....	8
How do I keep my plan for employment moving?.....	10
Responsibilities — RSB's and mine.....	11
Getting hired.....	12
Now that I'm on the job.....	14
Now that I've been working for awhile.....	15
What if I disagree with my counselor?.....	16
The Client Assistance Program (CAP).....	17
VR checklist.....	18

What is Vocational Rehabilitation?

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a program that provides the services, equipment, and training you need to get a job, return to a job, keep a job or get a better job. In Missouri, VR services for people with visual disabilities are delivered by a state agency called Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB).

Who can receive VR services?

To receive vocational rehabilitation services from RSB...

1. You must have a visual impairment or disability which severely limits your ability to get or keep a job. We serve people with all disabilities, but one of them **must** be visual.
2. You must need VR services to prepare for work, or to get or keep a job.



How do I get in touch with RSB?

You can call RSB at 1-800-592-6004. You will then choose from a menu to select the office nearest you. Your call will be answered by someone in one of our district offices (see the map on page 21). We'll ask you some questions, answer any questions you may have, and put you in touch with one of our rehabilitation counselors.

How do I prepare for my first interview with an RSB counselor?

Soon after you have contacted RSB (usually less than two weeks), you will be contacted by a counselor who will set up an appointment at a time and place convenient for you. This first appointment is usually held in your home, but it can be at an RSB office or some other location, if you prefer.

Once your appointment is set, it's very helpful if you gather recent medical records, especially the results of any eye exams. School

and work records are also valuable at this first meeting.

Before the appointment, complete the VR Checklist on pages 18-20 to give your counselor the information needed to get your rehabilitation started in the right direction.

How does my rehabilitation begin?

Vocational rehabilitation usually starts with your first interview with an RSB counselor. Counselors are professionals who are trained to work with people with disabilities and assist them in **developing a plan** to reach their work goals.



The counselor will discuss your strengths, identify any limitations you have, and help you determine your goals in entering or reentering the world of work. At this meeting, you will decide whether or not to apply for services. If you decide to apply, you will sign an application for services and the process begins.

How do I learn if I'm eligible for services?

Your counselor does most of the eligibility determination. Your **visual condition** and its impact on your **ability to work** are the most important factors. If the medical records you provide at the first interview are not enough to verify your visual eligibility, your counselor might ask you to sign a release of information so we can obtain **current eye information** from your doctor. If no recent eye information is available, you might be asked to take a **vision test** or **examination**, at no cost to you. All of this must be done within 60 days, unless you agree to an extension. We will try to do it as quickly as possible. Once the eligibility decision is made, your counselor will notify you by letter.

Now that I'm eligible, what happens next?

Once your eligibility is approved, the next step is to create a plan for employment just for you. During the development of this



plan, you will make many decisions. You will decide on your career goals, your work interests, the type of services you need, and the providers of those services. Your counselor will be your partner in making these “informed choices.” Informed choice means that you have obtained all the information you need to decide for yourself about the direction your rehabilitation will take. You may look to your counselor to help gather this information. He or she may also help you make decisions if necessary.



The first part of developing a plan for employment consists of **knowing yourself**. It’s important to understand your strengths, capabilities and qualifications. You and your counselor will evaluate all of these things, sometimes with the aid of tests or other services. Then you’ll move on to the next step, understanding the workplace that you wish to enter.



Understanding the world of work

that you've chosen increases your chances of being successful. If you wish to work in a career that is not available in your area, you will have to consider moving. If you don't want to move, you'll have to consider the types of work available in your local area. Your counselor can help you locate information about jobs in your local area and throughout the state.

Next, you will be **setting an employment goal**. Along with your counselor, you will consider all the information developed during the previous two steps and make an informed choice about the employment goal that's right for you. This goal should be as clear as you can make it. You've put a lot of time and thought into choosing it, and it plays a crucial role in determining the success of your rehabilitation.



After you and your counselor have agreed on an employment goal, you must **select the services and service providers** necessary for your success. Your counselor has valuable information and expertise to help you choose services and providers. You'll be given the names of licensed and contracted service providers, information about those providers, and, in some cases, other consumers' experiences with the providers. You'll then choose the services you need and a provider for each service.

Here's a list of some of the services provided by RSB:

- educational services, including commercial training, vocational-technical schools, college and university programs;
- treatment to help improve your physical or mental condition;
- interpreter services (sign language or foreign language);

- reader services;
- instruction in independent living and travel;
- transportation to get to and from rehabilitation services;
- telecommunication, sensory and other technology;
- rehabilitation technology services (computer and other electronic equipment);
- assistance in getting services from other agencies;
- assistance in moving from school to work;
- work licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks and supplies needed to start a business;
- assistance in finding a job;
- job coaching to learn job tasks and expectations; and
- follow-up services for you and your employer to ensure your success in continued employment.



OR

You may be already working but want to do your job better or move up with your employer. Your counselor will follow the same process you've just read about, except for introducing you to the world of work. You will still need to evaluate yourself, determine your goals and select the services and providers necessary to achieve those goals. All of these steps can be accomplished while you keep your job and continue to work.

Now that I have a plan for employment, how do I keep that plan moving?

Once you've started receiving the services listed on your plan for employment, there are certain things you can expect from your counselor and certain things your counselor needs to expect from you. Let's start with the counselor's responsibilities.

The counselor should...

- arrange regular appointments with you at a convenient location and assist with transportation as needed;
- have contact with you at least once a month;
- assist you, as needed, with planning for services to reach your employment goals;
- make sure that services you need are provided when you need them;
- arrange to pay for the services in your plan before they are provided to you;
- review your progress and talk with you about how you are doing in your plan for employment;
- work with you to make any needed changes in your plan for employment; and
- inform you of your rights to appeal any decision made by RSB regarding your case.

Your counselor expects you to...

- be an active partner in the rehabilitation process, from referral through employment;
- be progressively working toward the completion of your work plan;
- be responsible for telling RSB before any service starts that you want RSB to pay for the service;
- stay in contact (in person or by phone, e-mail, or regular mail) at least monthly and keep RSB advised of any changes needed in your plan for employment;
- discuss any additional service you may feel is necessary before that service starts (RSB CANNOT pay for any service unless it is authorized BEFORE the service starts); and
- notify RSB when you complete employment applications, schedule interviews, or when you're hired.





Getting hired

As you progress through the services in your plan for employment, you and your counselor will be discussing going to work. During this time, you will be preparing job applications, designing and distributing a resume, and interviewing for jobs. You and your counselor will work together on this very important step — getting a job!

The process of finding a job started on the first day you met with your counselor. It's a natural part of the process for you to make many contacts with people in the world of work. The people who provide your services will also address employment issues with you. Since the starting point of your job search was that first appointment, you should be thinking about finding a job throughout the process.



Once your job search becomes full-time, you can expect to have more contact with your counselor. You should do as much of the job search for yourself as you can, but your



counselor also will be available to assist. One of the most important activities in searching for a job is networking, and your counselor can be an invaluable partner in this effort. You should keep your counselor updated on your search activities. A number of services exist to help you find labor market information, job vacancies, and resume development skills. Your counselor can connect you with these services and help keep your job search on track.

Now that I'm on the job...

Congratulations! You've found a job! You've started the new job and may think that your contact with RSB is over, right? Not just yet. Stay in close contact with RSB for the first 90 days of employment. Your counselor can offer advice, resources, or services to make sure you perform effectively on that new job. In many cases, the most valuable service your counselor can offer is problem-solving, answering many "how do I..." questions.



Counselors have heard these questions often and are well-prepared to help both you and your employer find the answers that will make your employment successful.

Now that I've been working for awhile...

After 90 days of employment, your counselor will discuss keeping your case open for the delivery of less intensive, post-employment services. If that's not necessary, your counselor will discuss closure of your case.

Closure does not necessarily mean your contact with RSB is over. Your case may be closed now that you've achieved your employment goal, but please remember that it can be reopened at any time. Reopening can occur when there's a small problem like the need for a new piece of equipment at work, or when a larger problem comes up, such as the need for a new, better, or different job. You're not on your own out there. RSB is just a phone call away.

What if I disagree with my counselor about anything?

There is a system to make sure that you exercise choice in your selection of goals, services, providers, and employment during your rehabilitation. If you disagree with any decision made by your counselor or anyone at RSB, you have the right to use any or all of the methods below to settle the disagreement. You don't have to do them in any order.

1. You may contact your counselor's supervisor at the district office. The district supervisor can review any decision made by the counselor in your case.

2. You may request an administrative review. This means that a representative of RSB's director will meet with you, review the decision that was made, and allow you to present facts and evidence showing why the decision may have been incorrect. This request must be made in writing to the director of RSB.

3. You may request mediation of the disagreement with a skilled mediator selected by you from a list provided by RSB. The mediator, who has no connection with RSB, meets with you and an RSB representative and attempts to resolve the dispute. This request must be made in writing to the director of RSB.

4. You may request an impartial hearing. A hearing officer, selected by you from a list provided by RSB, will render a decision after giving both sides an opportunity to present their cases. Hearing officers also have no connection with RSB. This request must be made in writing to the director of RSB.

If you have any questions about your rights regarding rehabilitation services, you may contact the:

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

1-800-392-8667

VR Checklist

Please fill out this checklist and bring it to your first appointment. It will also speed the eligibility process if you bring copies of the following documents to your interview:

1. the most current medical records which document your visual condition and/or any other disabilities;
2. your educational history;
3. your work history (paid or volunteer); and
4. verification of your Social Security Number.

Please indicate if you receive any of the benefits listed below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SSI | <input type="checkbox"/> SSDI |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Both SSI/SSDI | <input type="checkbox"/> TANF |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Workers Comp. | <input type="checkbox"/> Private insurance |

If you receive any of these benefits,
please have documentation available at your
first appointment, including an award letter for
SSI and/or SSDI.

In what ways are you limited in getting or
keeping a job?

If you are employed now, what difficulties are
you experiencing on the job?

Do you use a cane, brace, wheelchair, hearing
aid, computer, visual aid, or other assistive
device?

☐ YES ☐ NO



If YES, please specify:

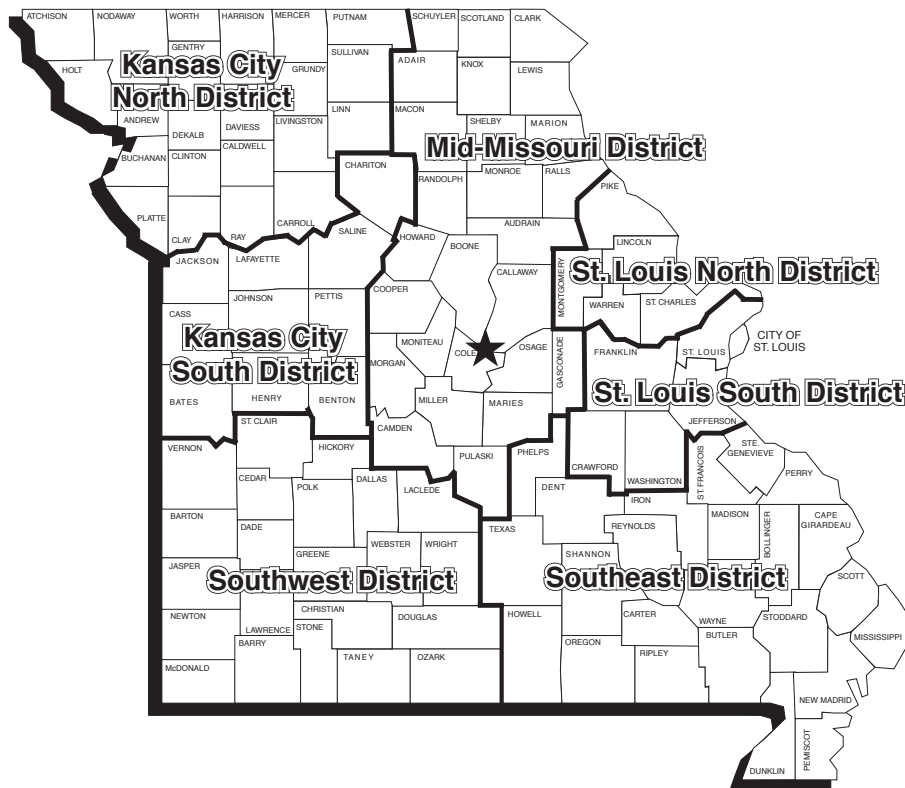
If you are not employed now, what do you see as the advantages of going to work?

What type of work would you like to do?

What training or educational opportunities would prepare you for this type of work?



Missouri Department of Social Services
Family Support Division
Rehabilitation Services for the Blind



Consumers may call toll-free at
1-800-592-6004

**Kansas City North
District**

615 E. 13th St.,
Room 409
Kansas City, MO
64106
816-889-2677
Fax: 816-889-2504

**Kansas City South
District**

4900 Swope Pkwy,
Ste. 2 S
Kansas City, MO 64130
816-929-7171
Fax: 816-929-7170

Mid-Missouri District

308 East High Street,
Suite B101
Jefferson City, MO
65101
573-751-2714
Fax: 573-526-4526

Southeast District

106 Arthur Street,
Suite E
PO Box 369
Sikeston, MO 63801
573-472-5240
Fax: 573-472-5393

Southwest District

149 Park Central Sq.,
Room 640
Springfield, MO 65806
417-895-6386
Fax: 417-895-6392

★ State Office

615 Howerton Ct.
PO Box 2320
Jefferson City, MO
65102
573-751-4249
Fax: 573-751-4984
DSS TDD:
1-800-735-2966

**St. Louis North
District**

10449 St. Charles Rock
Road, Room 401
St. Ann, MO 63074
314-890-4200
Fax: 314-426-3560
TDD: 314-426-7064

**St. Louis South
District**

Two Campbell Plaza
Plaza, Floor 3B
St. Louis, MO 63139
314-877-0151
Fax: 314-877-0168
TDD: 314-877-0169

RSB Website:

www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/index.htm



Missouri Department of Social Services
Family Support Division
Rehabilitation Services for the Blind
615 Howerton Court
PO Box 2320
Jefferson City, MO 65102

(573) 751-4249

www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/rsb/index.htm



Place
stamp
here

