

PRIDE PROVIDER : MODULE 3

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES-VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DRS-VR)



MODULE OVERVIEW

- **The role of DRS-VR**
- **Core services and supports offered by DRS-VR**
- **Stages and steps in the VR process**
- **How to connect job-seeking refugees with disabilities to a VR office and VR counselor**
- **Illinois WorkNet Centers**
- **Featured PRIDE partner: Business and Career Services**

FACTS ABOUT JOB-SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE U.S.



As of 2016, only 17.9% of Americans with disabilities were employed, compared to 65.3% of the non-disabled population.



However, people with disabilities, including refugees who have medical conditions, diagnoses, and/or disabilities that affect their ability to work, can work and pursue employment goals and careers with the right kinds of supports and resources.



The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), a key PRIDE partner, can provide critical services to open the door to employment pathways for job-seeking refugees with disabilities.

WHAT IS VR?

-  VR stands for “vocational rehabilitation.”
-  VR services are provided through DRS, which is part of the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).
-  Goal of VR: to support people with disabilities to “find quality employment” that pays a competitive wage and “offers a chance for advancement.”²

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (DHS)

- ✓ Every state has a vocational rehabilitation agency that is designed to help job-seekers with disabilities meet their employment goals.
- ✓ The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), part of DHS, is the Illinois lead agency that provides employment services for more than 45,000 job-seekers with disabilities in 45 offices across the state of Illinois.



DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (DRS) MISSION

“DRS works in partnership with people with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities.”³

POPULATIONS SERVED BY DRS

- **People with all types of disabilities, including refugees with disabilities**
- **People who face barriers to employment that result from physical and/or cognitive impairments**
- **Employers who desire a diverse work force**
- **Employers who want to provide accessible services to customers with disabilities**
- **Employers who want to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities**

PROGRAMS OFFERED BY DRS

- **Transition for Youth**
- **Home Services Program**
- **Bureau of Blind Services**
- **Traumatic Brain Injury Program**
- **Services to Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind**
- **Vocational Rehabilitation**

STAGES IN VR PROCESS

- **Eligibility determination**
- **Assessment of vocational needs**
- **Development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)**
 - **An IPE is a written plan developed between the client and the VR counselor outlining the individual's vocational goal and the services to be provided to reach that goal.**
- **Coordination of services**
- **Post-employment services**

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES?

To be eligible for VR services, an individual:

- **Must be between 16 and 64 years of age**
- **Must have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial barrier to employment**
- **Must be able to benefit from VR services to achieve a satisfying employment outcome**
- **Must require VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment**

HOW CAN DRS-VR SUPPORT JOB-SEEKING REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES?

- **DRS-VR services and programs can help refugees with disabilities:**
 - **Prepare for full-time or part-time employment**
 - **Enter employment**
 - **Retain employment**
 - **Advance in employment**

**HOW CAN SERVICE PROVIDERS
SUPPORT JOB-SEEKING
REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES TO
ACCESS DRS-VR SERVICES?**

7 STEPS TO GETTING A JOB THROUGH DRS-VR

Connect with a local VR office to schedule an interview with a VR counselor

Connect with a DRS-VR counselor with all required documents

Counselor determines eligibility for VR services

Identify employment goal and services with DRS-VR

Make Individual Plan of Employment (IPE)

Obtain employment & follow-up

Successful case closure after 90 days on the job

HOW TO CONNECT REFUGEE CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES WITH VR SERVICES

- Contact a local VR office in your area
- Support your refugee client to complete the online referral application
- A VR counselor will contact and meet with the refugee client within 30 days to determine his/her eligibility.

DRS ONLINE APPLICATION



If you live in Illinois and have a disability, the Division of Rehabilitation Services may be able to help you find a job or live at home independently.

To apply for services, begin by completing the form below. Once you have submitted this form, a counselor will contact you to set up an appointment to complete the application process. During this appointment, we will discuss your goals, the nature of your disability, and the services we can provide.

To learn more about the types of services available, please see [Rehabilitation Services](#).

Service: I would like help getting or keeping a job
 I would like help living independently at home

I have the *most* difficulty:

First Name:

Middle Name:

Last Name:

Gender:

Date of Birth:

Social Security Number:

Street Address:

Apartment Number:

Zip Code:

City:

County:

Phone Number:

Phone Mode:

Phone Type:

Email Address:

Language Preference:

Other Language:

Referral Source:

Submit

Apply Online

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO BRING TO FIRST APPOINTMENT WITH VR COUNSELOR

- 1. Original identification verification (e.g., driver's license, passport, state ID, birth certificate)**
- 2. Original Social Security card, permanent residency card, or visa**
- 3. Social Security benefits award letter**
- 4. Medical records (e.g., documentation of disabling condition)**
- 5. Employment documents (e.g., resume, list of experience)**
- 6. School information/records**
- 7. Training records/certificates**
- 8. Proof of income (e.g., pay stub, taxes)**

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **The individual's daily life**
 - **Movement around the house**
 - **Travel in the community**
 - **Participation in major life activities**
 - **Performance of specific tasks**

CORE VR SERVICES

- **Assessment**
- **Counseling and guidance**
- **Referral**
- **Restoration**
- **Vocational training**
- **Maintenance and transportation**
- **Travel and mobility support**
- **Interpreter services**

CORE VR SERVICES (CONT'D)

- **Reader services**
- **Transition services**
- **Personal assistance**
- **Rehabilitation technology**
- **Supported employment**
- **Tools and equipment**
- **Job placement**

Obtain employment & follow-up



Timeframe:
90 days

CLOSING A VR CASE

- **DRS-VR case may be closed when a client has successfully maintained 90 days of employment in one job situation.**
- **DRS-VR usually does not close a case until the client and the VR Counselor discuss it. However, if multiple attempts are made by DRS-VR to contact the client but the client cannot be reached, DRS-VR will close the client's case.**
- **If a client's case is closed, he/she may reapply to VR at anytime.**

VR CASE EXAMPLE

Sonam is a 25-year-old Deaf Bhutanese refugee who arrived in Chicago after living in a refugee camp in Nepal for 20 years with her parents. She now lives with her two older brothers.

Since her arrival in the U.S., Sonam has been receiving social services from a South Asian non-profit agency, where she is taking an ESL class. She is fluent in Nepalese. She does not use sign language but can read lips. Sonam submitted an online referral form to DRS. She met with a VR counselor, who contacted her within 30 days.

VR CASE EXAMPLE (CONT'D)

A Nepalese interpreter was present to help facilitate the conversation at DRS. Prior to this meeting, Sonam was unaware that she might qualify for a job or job training opportunities in this country.

After the initial meeting with the VR counselor, Sonam's case was opened and she was approved to take sign language classes and explore job training opportunities. As Sonam enjoys cooking spicy curry dishes, her VR counselor helped her enroll in the 16-week chef training program at the Chinese American Service League in Chinatown. After she completes the training, she will be placed in a culinary job.

USEFUL LINKS

- **DHS contact information**
<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29736>
- **DRS online application**
<https://wr.dhs.illinois.gov/wrpublic/wr/setReferral.do>



**ILLINOIS WORKNET CENTERS/
AMERICAN JOB CENTERS: ANOTHER
RESOURCE THAT PARTNERS WITH
DRS-VR TO SUPPORT JOB SEEKERS
WITH DISABILITIES**

ILLINOIS WORKNET CENTERS CASE EXAMPLE 1



ILLINOIS WORKNET CENTERS CASE EXAMPLE 1

Adelaide, a 60-year-old transgender refugee from Afghanistan, has severe rheumatoid arthritis and a history of depression following an abusive marriage. She has lived in the DuPage area for the past 10 years.

Adelaide has recently been laid off from her job as a receptionist at a dental office. Now she would like to change fields and pursue a career in domestic violence counseling for refugees. She has heard about Illinois WorkNet Center services from a former co-worker.

Adelaide attends a Workforce Center group orientation, where she learns about a Domestic Violence Advocacy training offered through a partner agency. After the training, the WorkNet Center connects her with a counseling program at the College of DuPage so that she can become a certified counselor.

**PRIDE PARTNER ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
AMERICAN JOB CENTER
BUSINESS AND CAREER SERVICES, INC.**



Cook County American Job Centers are Equal Opportunity Employers/Programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

WHAT ARE ILLINOIS WORKNET CENTERS?

American Job Centers:

- Offer job seekers and businesses efficient and effective recruitment, hiring, and training expertise and assistance
- Offer a wide range of employment resources, tools, training workshops, career counseling, and networking opportunities
- Serve as a bridge to an extensive network of employment opportunities and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) approved trainings

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

What is WIOA?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act aims to help job seekers and workers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and match employers with skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Funding for WIOA is from the Federal Department of Labor.

WHAT GROUPS BENEFIT FROM ILLINOIS WORKNET CENTER SERVICES?

Illinois WorkNet Centers serve a wide range of groups, including:

- Employers
- Job seekers
- Veterans
- Youth
- People with disabilities

BUSINESS AND CAREER SERVICES, UNC.

Business and Career Services, Inc., a PRIDE partner, provides the following services:

- **On-site Computer Workshops**
- **Employment Workshops**
- **On-site Recruitment Events**
- **Job Referral and Placement Services**
- **Funding for Occupational Training**
- **Internship Opportunities and Paid Work Experience for Young Adults (Ages 18-24)**
- **Referrals to Community and Support Services**
- **Disability Resources**
 - **Ticket to Work Program**

BUSINESS AND CAREER SERVICES, INC. CONTACT INFORMATION

**L. M. Pepper Curington, Disability Service Manager
Business and Career Services, Inc.**

723 W. Algonquin Rd

Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Phone: 847-437-9995

Fax: 847-981-7182

Email: pcurington@bcsillinois.org

[Website for additional information](#)

ILLINOIS WORKNET CENTERS CASE EXAMPLE 2

Stepan, a 60-year-old refugee from Bosnia, originally resettled in Colorado but later moved to northern Cook County, Illinois, to be closer to his son. He has medical issues that affect his heart that have required him to be fitted with a pacemaker. Stepan has been unemployed for the past 5 years.

Prior to being unemployed, Stepan owned his own business and was earning approximately \$30,000 per year in Colorado. Now that his health is stable, Stepan wants to go back to work but realizes that he needs some additional training to pursue his dream of becoming a building engineer.

ILLINOIS WORKNET CENTERS CASE EXAMPLE 2 (CONT'D)

In an effort to obtain this training, Stepan researched several possibilities and found information pertaining to the local Illinois WorkNet Center.

Further investigation provided the opportunity for Stepan to attend a WIOA Orientation, where he learned more about training, education, and employment. Stepan was able to enroll in the program, which allowed him to go to school and fulfill his dream of becoming a building engineer. Upon completion of the training, Stepan received employment services and was able to find a position with a major company as a maintenance technician.

SOURCES

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4. Case study example from ADOPT project
5. Condon, C, Gandolfo, C., Brugnaro, L., Thomas, C. (2004). Getting the most from the public vocational rehabilitation system. Tools for Inclusion. 19.