



VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

CHAPTER 31

WHAT IS THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM?

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program is authorized by Congress under Title 38, United States Code, Chapter 31. It is sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 program. The VR&E program assists Veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment handicap and Servicemembers who are in the process of transitioning from military to civilian employment prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For Veterans and Servicemembers with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

BASIC PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY

The law generally provides for a 12-year basic period of eligibility in which VR&E services may be used. The 12-year period begins on the latter of these dates:

- Date of separation from active military duty.
- Date the Veteran was first notified of a service-connected disability rating.

WHO IS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE VR&E SERVICE?

Active Duty Servicemembers are entitled if they:

- Expect to receive an honorable or other than dishonorable discharge upon separation from active duty.
- Obtain a VA memorandum rating or Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) rating of 20% or more.
- Are determined by VR&E to be in need of rehabilitation services because of an employment handicap.



Disabilities determined by VA to be related to your military service can lead to monthly non-taxable compensation, enrollment in the VA health care system, a 10-point hiring preference for federal employment and other important benefits. Ask your VA representative or Veterans Service Organization representative about Disability Compensation, Pension, Health Care, Caregiver Program, Career Services, Educational Assistance, Home Loan Guaranty, Insurance and/or Dependents and Survivors' Benefits.



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- Are under the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, Servicemembers who are participating in IDES are presumed entitled. This provision will expire in December 2016.

Veterans are entitled if they:

- Have received, or will receive an honorable or other than dishonorable discharge.
- Have a VA service-connected disability rating of 10% with a serious employment handicap or 20% or more with an employment handicap.
- Are determined by VR&E to be in need of rehabilitation services because of an employment handicap.

HOW IS ENTITLEMENT ESTABLISHED?

You are entitled to services if you have a 20% service-connected disability and an employment handicap. If your service-connected disability is only 10%, you must have a serious employment handicap to be eligible for services. A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) will work with you to determine if you meet the entitlement criteria.

A comprehensive evaluation is completed with a VRC and includes:

- A full assessment of your interests, aptitudes, and abilities.
- An assessment of whether service-connected disabilities impair your ability to find and/or hold a job using the occupational skills already attained.
- Vocational exploration activities and goal development leading to suitable employment and/or maximum independence at home and in the community.
- Exploration of labor market and wage information.
- Selection of a VR&E program track.
- Development of an individualized rehabilitation plan to achieve the identified employment and/or independent living goal.

WHAT IS A REHABILITATION PLAN?

A rehabilitation plan is an individualized and detailed outline of services provided under the VR&E program to meet the needs of the Veteran or Servicemember. The plan is a signed agreement between the Veteran or Servicemember and VA. It is designed to assist the Veteran or Servicemember to

achieve his/her goals. The following service delivery options may be provided under a Rehabilitation Plan:

- Reemployment with previous employer.
- Rapid employment services for new employment.
- Self-employment.
- Employment through long term services.
- Independent living services.

WHAT OTHER BENEFITS MAY BE PROVIDED?

After a rehabilitation plan is developed and signed, the services outlined in the plan will be provided to the Veteran in order to achieve suitable employment and/or an increase in independent living skills. The VRC will provide ongoing counseling, assistance, and coordination of services. These should include tutorial assistance, job-seeking skills training, medical and dental referrals to the Veterans Health Administration, adjustment counseling, payment of training allowance, and other services as required to help the Veteran or Servicemember achieve a career and live as independently as possible.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY?

You can apply by filling out [VA Form 28-1900, Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation](#), and mail it to the VA regional office that serves your area. You can also [apply online](#).

