

Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

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Norristown OVR

Introduction to OVR

- State Agency under PA Department of Labor and Industry
- 21 District Offices Statewide
 - 15 OVR District Offices
 - 6 Blindness and Visual Services District Offices
- VR Agencies are mandated by Federal Law; every state has a VR Agency
- Norristown OVR serves residents of Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties.

OVR' s Purpose

- The purpose of vocational rehabilitation services is to serve eligible individuals with disabilities which present a substantial impediment to employment. Services are provided to individuals to prepare for, enter into, engage in, or retain employment.



Eligibility Guidelines

- Individual must have a disability that interferes with their ability to get, maintain and/or keep gainful employment.
- Individual must want to become gainfully employed.
- Reasonable expectation that the individual will benefit from VR services in terms of a positive employment outcome.

Eligibility vs. Entitlement

- An individual must meet specific criteria in order to be determined eligible for services
- An individual is not automatically entitled to services
- Individual must be determined eligible for services within 60 days

OVR Services

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Diagnostic Services
- Medical and Vocational Evaluation
- Restoration Services
- Training Services
- Supported Employment Services
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Placement Services
- Assistive Technology Services
- Driver's Evaluation & Training
- Post Employment Services
- Referral to other service providers and resources

Early Reach Initiative

Group Outreach

- To provide workshops, presentations & consultations to school personnel, community stakeholders, youth with disabilities & families to increase awareness and access to services offered by OVR.

Individual Outreach

- Link to resources & vocational consultation so that youth with disabilities see themselves as future participants in the workforce.
- Assist appropriate youth with disabilities in planning for & making application to OVR.
- Consultations to explore possible career goals & motivation for independence

Norristown Early Reach

- The Norristown OVR district office has 2 Early Reach Coordinators
- Phone: 484-250-4340
- Angelica Webster, M.S.W., LSW
Email: angwebster@pa.gov
- Stephanie Perry, M.S.S., LSW
Email: stperry@pa.gov

Pre-Employment Transition Services

- With the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which re-authorized the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is making new opportunities available for students with disabilities. Through collaboration with community partners and schools, OVR will have an innovative approach to providing pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. These services are designed to provide job exploration and other services, such as counseling and self-advocacy training, in the early stages of the transition process.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (P.E.T.S)

- Who is eligible for P.E.T.S?
 - Student with a disability who is **ENROLLED** in high school, ages 14-22
 - Student that is eligible for an IEP/504 Plan, has an IEP/504, or represents themselves as a person with a disability
- Who is not eligible for P.E.T.S?
 - Youths 14-22 who are NOT enrolled in high school
 - Individuals over age 22

Pre-Employment Transition Services

- Five Core Services
 - Job Exploration Counseling
 - Work-Based Learning Experience
 - Counseling for Post-Secondary Education
 - Work Readiness Training
 - Self-Advocacy

Job Exploration Counseling

- Counseling and Guidance
- Attendance at IEP Meetings
- Exploration of job goals
- Career/Interest Inventories
- Community Based Work Assessment
- Job Shadowing (unpaid experience)
- Psychological Evaluation
- Project Search/PAS

*Service delivery determined by VRC

Work-Based Learning Experience (WBLE)

Students will be provided options for experiences to gain knowledge and skills needed to obtain competitive integrated employment or transition to post-secondary training. The students must be paid for this work experience, at minimum wage or higher. The WBLE will be determined on a can by case basis, and based on the student's area of interest, skills and abilities.

VRC will work with student and school staff to determine appropriateness for WBLE level. Student must be in plan status.

- Level 1
 - Recommended for students within their last 2 years of high school **would not require intensive onsite supervision.**
 - May include salary reimbursement
- Level 2
 - Recommended for students within their last 2 years of high school **who may require more onsite support.** OVR is in process of enrolling providers to provide this onsite support.
 - May include salary reimbursement

Counseling for Post-Secondary Education

- Counseling and guidance to review post-secondary options
- Discuss college accommodation needs
- Tours of postsecondary programs
- Assessments/Evaluations
- Psychological Evaluation
- Assistive Technology Evaluations
- HGAC

*Service delivery determined by VRC

Work Readiness Training

- Group service
- Provides students with knowledge needed to find and maintain competitive integrated employment. Curriculums can include soft skills training, interview skills, job readiness, job-seeking skills, HR and other skills needed to become workplace ready. Trainings can be provided to groups of students who are eligible or potentially eligible for OVR services.

Self Advocacy

- Group service
- Provided in a group format to assist students with disabilities to gain knowledge on disability awareness, advocating during an IEP process, understanding transition processes, and advocating for themselves in post-secondary education, employment, and coordinating social services. This can also include independent living skills training. Trainings can be provided to groups of students who are eligible or potentially eligible for OVR services.

How Do I Get Started with OVR

Request a referral

- Referrals can be made by the following:
 - Individual with disability *Students under the age of 18, require parent/guardian permission*
 - Agencies
 - Schools
 - Family member
 - Clergy
 - Hospitals

OVR Contact Information

- OVR Norristown District Office

1875 New Hope Street

Norristown, PA 19401

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