

8 Misconceptions About DVR

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1. DVR only serves students with severe cognitive impairments.

The truth is, DVR serves anyone who has trouble getting or keeping a job because of a mental or physical condition, and needs DVR services to get or keep a job. Check out the referral guidance on the Transition Tools for Teachers web page at: <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/transition.htm> .

An IEP or 504 plan are good indicators that a student who is interested in going to work should be referred to DVR. DVR services may also be needed for students without an IEP or 504 plan. A student may have a hidden condition or one that does not meet the level of severity required of an IEP or a 504 plan, but with the demands of work, be a barrier to employment.

If you have reason to believe a condition exists and will interfere with work, you should consider a referral to DVR. We can find someone to assess the disability, and pay for the assessment.

2. Parent's make too much money for our students to qualify for DVR.

An individual's eligibility for VR services does not depend on the individual's financial status. There is **NO** financial means test for DVR eligibility. DVR offers many different services. Many, like those listed below, are free:

- Help choosing the job goal that's right for you.
- Tests and other tools to better understand your talents, etc.
- On-the-job training with a real employer while you work.
- Job search and placement services.

Other services, such as transportation, school, vocational training, and assistive technology; may have a cost to the participant. DVR collects financial information to determine if a person can pay for, or what proportion they can pay, before using DVR funds.

Individuals who receive Social Security SSDI or SSI benefits and/or public assistance such as TANF, Food Stamps or Medicaid are not required to make a financial contribution toward the cost of services.

3. Why does DVR take so long to do anything?

DVR is not an employment agency. If someone needs a job immediately, the Job Center provides job search services.

A person needs to have the time and interest to work with DVR to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment. Selecting the employment goal requires a thorough understanding of the individual's preferences, needs, abilities, interests and strengths, and any resources needed to support their plan.

Participants can help the process move faster by showing up for appointments, returning documents and completing assessments.

4. DVR pays for college, like a scholarship for people with disabilities.

Training in institutions of post-secondary education can make a significant difference in achieving employment, independence and economic self-sufficiency. Post-secondary education expenses can be considered for DVR funding if the person has the ability to benefit in terms of an employment outcome.

Eligible individuals requesting assistance from DVR to pay for post-secondary education are required to apply for financial aid annually (FAFSA) and provide the DVR counselor with the Student Aid Report (SAR). *See #2.*

5. DVR closes cases in 90 days. My students can't even get a job in 90 days.

Each DVR case is individual. An IPE that includes postsecondary education could last for years. Individuals with significant cognitive disabilities may require additional time and supports to find and train for a job.

Once a person has a job the DVR counselor will follow the person's progress for at least 90 days to make sure employment is stabilized. If all is going well, DVR will close the case. If a person finds they need more help to keep the job, get the job back, or move up a person can request "Post Employment Services."

6. I invite DVR to all the IEPs and they never show up.

The IEP is rarely productive for developing DVR services, especially if the student has not applied for services yet. The IEP team should determine if the student should apply and if so, the teacher can make the referral. Both the [Referral Guidance](#) and "[Secondary Transition Referral Form](#)" can be found on the Transition Tools for Teachers web page at: <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/transition.htm> .

The best transition happens when there is a relationship between the teacher and DVR counselor. This enables both to agree on how to best coordinate services.

7. DVR only gives you one chance to get a job.

We hope the time and effort a client puts into their vocational plan results in the supports they need to get and keep a job. Services like Job Readiness Training, On the Job Evaluation and Job Coaching give clients the opportunity to explore a job and learn the skills so they can be successful.

If a person finds they need more help to keep the job, get the job back, or move up they can request "Post Employment Services." In addition, a person can always re-apply for DVR services if their job doesn't work out.

8. DVR doesn't really help kids obtain the job they want.

A DVR client has the right to choose their job goal and the services needed to reach it. The DVR counselor helps a person develop this based on an assessment of the persons rehabilitation needs considering their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. The client and DVR counselor agree to the plan.

Very few people get their dream job right out of high school. Even if a person has the education and experience needed for a particular job, they may have to start at an entry level position, at lower pay, than they wanted. DVR's responsibility is to help people begin their career.