**Chapter 308: Draft # 7**

**Self-Employment [4/12/22 JS]**

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Policy and Procedure Manual

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**Section I: Definitions**

**“Assessment”** is the process by which it is determined that the consumer has the skills, attributes, and resources to be a business owner and the business idea is evaluated to see if it is feasible.

**“Business Plan”** is a detailed outline that includes the business description, objectives, organizational structure and management, and the product and/or service of the business. It also includes a summary of the consumer’s qualifications, an analysis of the potential business environment and market, a financial plan (including start-up costs and long-term costs) and projected timelines for profit and sustainability of the business.

1. **"Competitive integrated employment"** means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment). The work is performed in an integrated setting. The individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled. The individual is at a location where the employee with a disability interacts with other employees, other persons, customers and vendors to the same extent as other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions. In the case of an individual who is self-employed, the person is earning income comparable to others without disabilities performing similar tasks and in similar occupations with similar training, experience, and skills “Competitive Integrated

**“Feasibility Study”** is a process to determine the viability of the consumer’s proposed business venture. Components of the study include, but are not limited to, a review of the business concept, consumer’s aptitude for self-employment, their management and technical skills, the market demand for the business’ product or service, and assessment of the financial resources necessary to start-up and maintain the business over time.

**“Feasible Business”** is a business which will generate adequate cash-flow and profits, withstand the risks it will encounter, remain viable in the long-term and meet the needs of the consumer. If a business does not generate enough income to meet expenses, including the owner’s time and efforts, there is usually no advantage to business ownership.

**“Marketing Analysis”** is a process for evaluating whether there is a market for the goods and/or services of a business and the potential challenges to the success of the business.

**“Marketing Plan”** is a plan that outlines the specific actions or steps the consumer intends to carryout to interest potential customers in the product and/or service the business offers.

**“Net Earnings**” are the gross earnings from the trade, profession, or business, minus allowable business deductions and depreciation.

**“Self-Employment”** Self-employment is considered competitive integrated employment. Self-employment includes a consumer-owned business, profession or trade that sells goods and/or services for the purpose of making a profit. A self-employed consumer works for themselves at least part-time for profit or fees, at home or another work site. Self-employment includes independent contractors, sole proprietorships, partnerships (51% consumer-owned), or corporations. The business must be registered with the Vermont Secretary of State and comply with all federal and state laws.

***Guidance - Activities Not Considered Self Employment***

DVR does not consider income-generating activities that are intermittent and result in less than minimum wage as self-employment. “Intermittent” is defined as working less than one day per week or ten days per month. For example:

Peter makes greeting cards and sells them at craft fairs during the holiday season and occasionally at other events. The income generated from these sales is not enough to help with the costs of basic living expenses. DVR would not find these activities to meet the definition of part-time self-employment.

***End Guidance***

**“Self-Employment for Self-Sufficiency”** is defined as self-employment that allows a consumer to meet daily living expenses, including Federal and State taxes, without supplemental income from public sources such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Reach-Up. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid for Working Disabled benefits are exempted. For DVR purposes self-employment must result in net earnings that exceed Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) as defined by the Social Security Administration.

**“Self-Employment for Supplemental Income”** is defined as part-time self-employment that allows a consumer to improve their quality of life and continue to receive financial support from public sources such as SSI, SSDI, Reach Up, SNAP and Medicaid for Working Disabled benefits are exempted. For DVR purposes, supplemental self-employment results in net earnings that are less than Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) as defined by the Social Security Administration.

**Section II: General Policy**

1. DVR supports self-employment as a potential employment outcome equal to other forms of competitive, integrated employment. DVR encourages and supports consumers to consider self-employment. It can offer unique opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome that truly meets their unique strengths, needs, and interests.
2. Self-employment is an employment outcome not an employment goal. The IPE goal must identify the business or proposed business approved by the counselor.

***Guidance***

When a consumer is considering self-employment as an employment setting, it will be important for the DVR counselor to explore whether self-employment is appropriate for the consumer. Part of this process is reviewing with the consumer the positives and potential negatives of self-employment. Such as -

**Self-employment may be appropriate for a consumer when-**

* They have experience operating a business.
* They require a work setting or schedule under their control.
* The consumer has a marketable business idea with sound prospects for success; or
* The competitive labor market is tight, and placement is otherwise unlikely.

**Some of the advantages of self-employment are:**

* Independence—control the work setting and schedule
* Employment when other opportunities are few
* Being the boss
* Interacting with customers, suppliers, and others
* Doing enjoyable work
* Sense of achievement/satisfaction if the business succeeds
* Control over business decisions
* Better standard of living
* Feeling part of the community
* Entry into new networks in your community

**Some of the disadvantages of self-employment are:**

* Pleasing the customer (the REAL boss)
* Long, hard hours with little free time
* Fluctuating income
* Unrelenting responsibility
* Possibility of business failure
* Stress on family and resources
  + Possible exacerbation of health problems/disability.
  + Might miss out on social supports of a traditional job

1. DVR distinguishes between self-employment for supplemental income and

self-employment for self-sufficiency. Because self-employment for self-sufficiency involves substantially greater challenges and risks for the consumer, DVR guidelines for IPE development, service provision, and funding are more rigorous and are described in Section VII of this chapter.

1. DVR may participate in partially funding a small business start-up or the retention of an existing business as approved by DVR.
2. DVR may not place an absolute dollar limit on specific service categories or total services provided. However, DVR may set spending guidelines to ensure reasonable costs to the program. The guidelines may not be so low as to deny the consumer a necessary service.

The DVR counselor may make an exception to the spending guidelines with the DVR Regional Manager’s approval. When considering exceptions to the spending guidelines, the DVR Regional Manager must consider the consumer’s ability to contribute to their services. The consumer contribution must be:

1. Reasonable,
2. Based on the consumer’s financial need, and
3. Not so high as to effectively deny the consumer a necessary services.
4. Consumers who receive SSDI/SSI benefits cannot be asked to contribute to the costs of their services. They must, however, look for comparable sources of funding.
5. Consultation with a benefits counselor is required for those consumers who are SSI/SSDI beneficiaries. This is because there are special rules around calculating and reporting self-employment income to SSA.
6. DVR funds are not a grant. The IPE must identify the specific goods or services to be purchased with DVR funds as part of the business plan.

**Section III: Process**

1. Overview
2. The process leading to DVR funding of a consumer’s goal to earn supplemental income through self-employment or income leading to self-sufficiency through self-employment requires a team effort between the DVR counselor, the consumer, outside consultants, and other resources.
3. Once the consumer has identified an employment (occupational) goal, there are multiple steps to be completed and factors to be considered before DVR funding of a self-employment plan is determined. These include but are not limited to:
4. Reviewing expectations, roles, and responsibilities,
5. Assessment,
6. Development of the IPE,
7. Development of the business plan,
8. Review of the business feasibility,
9. Determination of DVR funding contribution,
10. Modification of IPE to reflect DVR funding and employment strategy/outcome, as appropriate,
11. Monitoring business plan implementation, and
12. Case closure.

The expectations at each step in the process will differ depending on whether the consumer is looking at self-employment for the purpose of obtaining supplemental income or income leading to self-sufficiency.

1. The self-employment process used by DVR is designed to ensure that those who complete the process have an excellent chance to launch a successful business. To ensure that we do all that we can to help a consumer succeed, **DVR requires the successful completion of each step/activity before proceeding.**
2. Reviewing Roles and Expectations

It is very important that the consumer fully understands the process that DVR uses when it considers whether to contribute funds toward self-employment for the purpose of obtaining supplemental income or income leading to self-sufficiency. It is important for consumers to understand at the beginning that **DVR is considered a secondary source of funding for initial business start-up.** Consumers must identify other sources of funding their self-employment or small business endeavors.

1. Role of Consumer

The consumer’s role is to take the lead in determining the business concept and development of the business plan. DVR will provide support and assistance, but most of the work needs to be done by the consumer. This includes but is not limited to:

* 1. research,
  2. writing the business plan,
  3. securing funding sources for the business, and
  4. identifying record keeping and monitoring systems for the business.

**DVR has developed a handout (Attachment A.) that the counselor can walk through with the consumer to outline role expectations.**

1. Role of DVR Counselor

The DVR counselor’s role is to:

* 1. Explain the DVR’s and the consumer’s responsibilities,
  2. Assess the consumer’s individual potential for self-employment,
  3. Guide and support the consumer through the process and refer the consumer to community resources for additional guidance and other possible funding sources.

The DVR counselor will consult with their supervisor and others with expertise, as needed.

1. Role of the Business Consultant

The business consultant’s role is to guide the consumer through the business plan process. The consultant does not write the business plan. The consultant can recommend potential funding sources and help assemble a funding package. The consultant can help the consumer prepare for meetings with potential funders, suggest marketing strategies, assist with the feasibility study, and make recommendations on the feasibility of the proposed business.

1. Role of Other Professionals

There may be a need to involve other professionals to provide guidance as the consumer moves through the process leading to self-employment such as:

* 1. Benefits Counselors,
  2. Assistive Technology Professionals,
  3. Web Developers,
  4. Marketing Consultants,
  5. Accountants. or
  6. Attorneys.

1. Role of DVR Self-Employment Review Committee

DVR policy offers the potential for substantial funding for self-employment plans designed to achieve income leading to self-sufficiency for the consumer. Because of the level of risk to the consumer, all business plans developed for this purpose are evaluated by a Self-Employment Review Committee.

The role of the Self-Employment Review Committee is to:

* 1. Review the business plan,
  2. Make recommendations for changes, as appropriate, and
  3. Approve or disapprove the business plan.

The DVR Director will designate the make up of the Self Employment Review Committee. The goal of the committee is to ensure the best possibility of success for the self-employment plan.

**Section IV: Assessment**

1. When considering self-employment as the employment outcome for a consumer, both the consumer’s skills, interests, and abilities as well as the business idea and plan must be assessed.
2. Consumer Assessment
3. Successful self-employment requires specific knowledge, skills, and abilities. It also requires the consumer to be strongly self-directed. Therefore, it is important to conduct an assessment with the consumer to determine if self-employment is the right employment goal and outcome for them.
4. The level of assessment will differ if self-employment is intended to provide supplemental income or income leading to self-sufficiency for consumer. The following describes expectations when the intent of self-employment is to achieve self-sufficiency. Expectations for self-employment intended for supplemental income is found in Section VI of this chapter.
5. The focus of the consumer assessment is to determine whether the consumer has the skills and personality traits needed to successfully start and/or maintain a business. **At minimum** a**ll consumers self-sustaining self-employment must complete the Self Employment Self-Assessment (Attachment B.)**
6. If the consumer does not have a specific type of self-employment they want to pursue, a more formal assessment is required. These assessments are intended to determine the consumer’s interests, abilities, and capabilities. They allow consumers to explore various professions or trades that could be the basis of self-employment.The DVR counselor will select one or more DVR approved assessments, as appropriate, for the consumer.
7. It is also recommended that the DVR counselor and consumer consider the following assessment activities prior to the development of the IPE:
   1. An informational interview with a small business owner,
   2. Job shadows in the profession of interest,
   3. Work experiences in the profession of interest, and/or
   4. Small business development training.
8. Referral to a business consultant for market research analysis and exploration of potential financing availability.
9. Once all assessments are complete, the DVR counselor shall review and discuss the assessment results with the consumer and the feasibility of self-employment for the consumer. Ideally, the consumer and DVR counselor will agree on the feasibility of self-employment.
10. If the DVR counselor believes, after consultation with the consumer, that self-employment is not feasible for the consumer, they must consult with their regional manager before making this determination. If a decision is made not to go forward with a self-employment plan, the DVR counselor must provide the consumer with written notice of the decision and appeal information consistent with the requirements in Chapter 105.

1. Business Assessment

***Feasibility Study***

1. In addition to assessing the skills and abilities of the consumer, an assessment of the proposed business idea must also occur. This is called a “feasibility study.”

Most consumers will benefit from the services of a business consultant to guide them through this process. Each DVR office maintains a list of consultants that can help the consumer conduct the feasibility study.

1. Assessing the feasibility of a business idea involves research and analysis. Elements of the feasibility study include, but are not limited to:
2. Conducting a marketing analysis;
3. Conducting a financial analysis;
4. Developing a business plan;
5. Determining whether the consumer will require training in a specific trade, profession, and/or in business management; and
6. Determining what expertise and support is needed and available to help the consumer during the planning and implementation stages as well as on an on-going basis.

***Market Analysis***

1. A market analysis is a critical element in determining the feasibility of the consumer’s business idea. The market analysis must include answers to the following questions:
2. Who is most likely to buy the product or service?
3. Where do potential buyers reside?
4. How many potential buyers are there?
5. How many products or services will each person buy and how often?
6. Are there competitors selling the same or similar products or services in the area?
7. Many business ideas fail due to inadequate funding. So, it is important for the consumer to carefully and fully evaluate funding resources available to establish and maintain their proposed business as part of the marketing analysis. This includes:
8. Identifying the operational costs for establishing and maintaining the business
9. Considering the consumer’s existing financial obligations;
10. Determining what resources, the consumer can contribute to establishing and maintaining the business, including in-kind contributions such as equipment, vehicles, or business space;
11. Identifying whether there are family resources available to help establish or maintain the business; and
12. Assessing the consumer’s ability to secure funding from financial institutions including funding barriers such as current debt, bad credit, bankruptcy, or a criminal background.

***Guidance***

***Assessing feasibility of self-employment.***

**Attachment C will provide a complete picture of the consumer’s personal financial status and must be completed by the consumer if they are seeking to develop a self-sustaining self-employment plan. .**  It will be used to help determine the financial contribution the consumer can personally make to the business. The DVR counselor shall review and discuss with the consumer the responses to make sure all questions have been answered accurately and that there is agreement between the DVR counselor and the consumer about expenses and resources impacting self-employment.

How the consumer handles the assignment of completing Attachments B and C can help determine how ready the consumer is to pursue the self-employment option. If the consumer is enthusiastic about the idea of self-employment and determined to succeed, they are more likely to complete the assignments in a timely manner. If the answers on Attachment B are not specific and comprehensive, it may point to the need for more DVR counselor support or the need for additional training for the consumer before proceeding with the business idea. It is important to remember that going from the concept of self-employment to actual start-up of a business will probably not be a straight-line process for most people. There will be a need for reassessments along the way or a need to gain a skill or experience before moving ahead. There may even be setbacks related to the consumer’s disability. The DVR counselor and the DVR program must be supportive and understanding of the process. DVR will provide the supports and services needed to determine if the consumer has the skills and traits to be successfully self-employed, and that the business idea is feasible. When those determinations have been made, the consumer is ready to develop the Business Plan.

***End Guidance***

**Section V: Business Plan**

1. It is important that the consumer have ownership of the Business Plan. Ownership only occurs if the consumer writes the Plan or works very closely with a resource person or organization doing the actual writing. The Plan serves as the roadmap for the consumer as well as a marketing tool to help secure any needed financial resources. At first sight, the development of a Business Plan may seem like a daunting task. However, it is only an extension of the feasibility study already completed so it should be a manageable task. Also, there are local and regional resources available to the consumer.
2. As with the assessment and feasibility study discussed in Section IV, the level of detail for a business plan intended to provide supplemental income and income leading to self-sufficiency differ. The following is focused on developing a business plan leading to self-sufficiency. A business plan designed to provide supplemental income for the consumer is discussed in Section VI of this chapter.
3. The DVR does not require a specific format for the Business Plan. When a consumer’s goal is to attain self-sufficiency, the plan must be a comprehensive document that fully explains to reviewers and lenders what the business goal is, what it will cost to start and run the business, and how start-up will be accomplished.

The Vermont Small Business Development Center uses this outline for Plan development:

1. Executive Summary
2. Business Description
3. Management Team
4. Market Analysis
5. Marketing Plan
6. Operational Plan
7. Financial Data
8. Supporting Documents
9. Each DVR district office maintains a general list of appropriate local and regional resources that can assist in doing self-assessments, writing feasibility and business plans, and researching potential funding sources. The DVR counselor will share these resources with each consumer investigating self-employment as their employment goal.

**Section VI: Self-Employment for Supplemental Income**

1. DVR supports consumers increasing their income to improve their quality of life through part-time self-employment. Because a self-employment plan designed to provide supplemental income entails less risk to the consumer, the requirements for developing a plan are less rigorous than required for consumers with a goal of self-sufficiency through self-employment. The process is as follows.
2. Assessment

DVR does not require consumers complete any specific assessment prior to committing to a supplemental self-employment plan. However, any of the assessment tools outlined in this chapter might be helpful to the consumer. It is recommended that a consumer who is considering supplemental self-employment conduct a self-assessment to determine if self-employment is a good option for them.

1. IPE Development

When developing an IPE designed to provide supplemental income through self-employment, DVR’s standard process for developing IPEs applies with the following additions:

1. The IPE must also include a business plan, and
2. Work incentive counseling for SSI/SSDI beneficiaries must be included in the plan.

Business Plan

Business plans for self-employment to provide supplemental income do not require the level of specificity as that leading to self-employment leading to self-sufficiency. However, all business plans must include:

1. Business goal; what type of business,
2. Name & address of the business,
3. Marketing and sales plan,
4. Non-DVR sources of funding,
5. Funding sought from DVR,
6. Identification of other parties in the business including family, friends or third-party companies, and
7. Expected monthly and annual income
8. Feasibility Determination
9. Based on the business plan the counselor must assess the feasibility of the enterprise. However, if the counselor is unsure of the viability of a plan they must consult with their supervisor and/or regional manager before proceeding. If the determination by the counselor is that the plan is not viable, the supervisor must review and approve this decision.
10. Funding
11. DVR does not require matching funds from the DVR consumer when the goal is supplemental income. However, if the plan is not viable without other sources of funding the DVR counselor can make accessing such funding contingent on receiving DVR funds.
12. The spending guideline for business plans designed to provide supplemental income is $1,500. Exceptions are permissible as specified in Section II G of this chapter.
13. Monitoring of Supplemental Self Employment
14. The DVR counselor and consumer must meet quarterly to review the consumer’s progress, address any problems that may occur, and ensure that start-up operations proceed as planned.
15. The consumer must provide monthly financial reports, such as profit and loss statements, a computer printout from an accounting software product, or an accountant’s report to compare the original financial profile of the self-employment venture during the first six (6) months of operation.

***Guidance:***

Bookkeeping is a key element of running a small business. Every expenditure and receipt of income must be recorded, inventory records need to be maintained, tax and payroll forms need to be completed and filed, etc. A self-employed person must have a basic understanding of bookkeeping principles and either the skills to keep the necessary records or the resources to hire a bookkeeping service.

***End Guidance***

1. Conditions for Closure of Self-Employment for Supplemental Income Cases

(1) The business has been operational for a minimum of 6 months.

1. The business is generating revenue at the level projected in their business plan and the consumer is being compensated for goods and services at the market rate for the community they reside. For example; if the consumer’s business is childcare their rates are similar to other childcare facilities.

**Section VII: Self-Employment Leading to Self-Sufficiency**

1. As noted, the DVR process for supporting self-employment plans leading to self-sufficiency is more rigorous because of the risks for the consumer. In all cases, the IPE will have at least one amendment. The process will be as follows:
2. Development of Initial IPE
3. The intent of the initial IPE is to establish the conditions for successful completion of the self-employment plan. The IPE may also include activities that develop the consumer’s skills (e.g., small business training, specialized courses related to a profession or trade, or financial counseling). The IPE must also include other supports the consumer may need to run a successful business such as assistive technology, financial software, business consultation and any other services required to achieve the initial goal.
4. Because some of these activities might extend beyond the 90-day timeline for IPE development, the DVR counselor and consumer should consider an extension to allow full exploration.

**Guidance**

If the consumer already has an operational business, that they want to expand this can also be an appropriate IPE goal. For example, if a consumer has a successful bookkeeping business that generates supplemental income, and they want to expand their client base to make it their primary source of income. In this situation the VR process is the same

1. Training and Education

(1) Additional training or education may be required before, or in conjunction with, the implementation of a business plan. Failure to complete required training or education will result in suspension or discontinuation of the self-employment plan. Anyone seriously considering self-employment should consider participation in business development training such as that conducted at a local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) or by the Micro-Business Development Program (MBDP). DVR expenditures for training and education are considered part of the evaluation costs and not considered “start-up” costs.

1. Development of Business Plan
2. Business plans designed to result in self-sustaining income for the consumer must be comprehensive and tied to a goal of earnings above the SGA level set by the Social Security Administration. Required elements include:
   * 1. A marketing analysis,
     2. A marketing plan,
     3. A staffing plan,
     4. A timeline for monitoring the plan’s implementation, including significant benchmarks,
     5. An estimate of capital needed,
     6. Necessary insurance coverage,
     7. State and federal requirements for the proposed business (e.g., licensure) and
     8. The identification of existing and potential sources of start-up capital and financing for business.
3. Feasibility Determination
4. After the activities in the initial IPE are completed, the DVR counselor and consumer will review the plan with their supervisor and the regional manager. After review supervisory review, the counselor must submit the comprehensive business plan to the Self-Employment Review Committee. The Committee will review whether:
5. The business plan is viable,
6. The business plan will result in self-sustaining employment,
7. The funding requested is sufficient, and
8. DVR funding is committed.

***Guidance***

Review panels bring expertise not normally found within our own staff resources. We must, however, be cautious to ensure that there are no conflict-of-interest issues between a panel member representing an existing business and the proposed business. In some instances, we will be dealing with small communities and customers well known in those communities. When we get authorizations from the consumer to release information to panel members, the consumer must be given an opportunity to ask for the removal of one or more panel members who the consumer feels cannot or will not objectively review the proposal because of personal history with the consumer or their family.

***End Guidance***

1. Upon completion of its review, the Self-Employment Review Committee will make one of the following determinations:
2. The business plan is accepted without modification and the funding is approved.
3. The business plan is accepted with some required modifications and the funding is approved.
4. The business plan is rejected with recommendations for improvement and resubmission.
5. The business plan is rejected, and resubmission is not recommended.
6. Amendment of the IPE
7. Once the Self-Employment Review Committee has approved the consumer’s business plan and DVR has committed funding, the DVR counselor must amend the IPE to include:
   1. The amount of funding DVR agreed to contribute for the business and the specific goods and services to be purchased with the DVR funds,
   2. The other sources of funding for the business,
   3. Key benchmarks and timelines for the business (e.g., targeted opening date, targeted number of customers within the first 6 months, and
   4. Specific revenue and earning goals.

***Guidance***

There should be a clear understanding at the time the amended IPE is written of the criterion to be used for determining success. The criterion will have to be set on an individual basis and may be as simple as “income equals outgo.” When the IPE has been completed, the person should be informed of the additional support available through post-employment services.

***End Guidance***

1. DVR will not dispense any funds until the IPE has been properly amended.
2. Funding
   1. Small business development requires a commitment of consumer resources as well as time. The consumer is generally responsible for securing or providing most funds needed to start and maintain a business. It is important for the consumer to remember that DVR can only serve as a secondary source of funding to start or maintain a business. DVR will work with the consumer to help search out potential resources.

In limited situations, these funding levels may be waived with the approval of the Regional Manager or the Division Director.

(1) The DVR counselor may authorize $1,000 to support the activities detailed in the initial IPE.

1. DVR may provide $10,000 in support of a self-employment plan leading to self-sufficiency **once approved by the Self-Employment Review Committee.** The counselor must not commit to any funding with the consumer prior to the review and approval of the Self-Employment Review Committee.

***Guidance***

The amount of support DVR provides provided will be dependent on the financial information provided in the Business Plan and the availability of support from other sources. As the Plan is implemented and the business develops, unanticipated expenses may arise beyond what was outlined in the IPE and the Business Plan. Some of these expenses may be best addressed through an amendment to the IPE or as Post Employment Services.

***End Guidance***

1. The consumer **must** have obtained one-to-one equivalent funding for the self-employment plan from other sources including but not limited:
   1. Business loans,
   2. Grants,
   3. Family resources,
   4. Personal financial contributions, or
   5. In kind contributions (e.g., space provided by the consumer, equipment, tools, a portion of the value of a vehicle to be used in the business, etc.)
2. The total funds requested are necessary for the successful launch of the business and do not exceed what is required.
3. The business intended to lead to self-sufficiency must meet the following requirements before funding may be dispensed. Specifically, the business must be:
   * + 1. Registered with the Secretary of State,
       2. In compliance with all Federal and State laws, and
       3. Insured.

***Guidance***

Registration allows ownership of the business name, gives a right to claim bad debts, and makes it possible to purchase business insurance. It allows the consumer a chance to establish a track record for future lending needs.

***End Guidance***

1. Monitoring of Self-Sustaining Self-Employment
2. During the first six months of operation, the DVR counselor and consumer must meet monthly to review the consumer’s progress, address any problems that may occur, and ensure that start-up operations proceed as planned.
3. The consumer must provide monthly financial reports, such as profit and loss statements, a computer printout from an accounting software product, or an accountant’s report to compare the original financial profile of the self-employment venture during the first six (6) months of operation. This report must contain detailed accounting of monthly revenues and expenses, including:
4. The dollar amount for goods or services sold,
5. The dollar amount of unpaid accounts,
6. A categorical listing of operating expenses,
7. The consumer salary or draw, and
8. Net income or loss.
9. Conditions for Closure Self-Sustaining Self-Employment
10. The business has been operational for a minimum of six (6) months.
11. The business made a net profit or demonstrated significant gross income.
12. The equity in the business has increased. Although unable to show a profit as mentioned above, a consumer may have increase equity, indicating growth and stability.

***Guidance***

When determining “success,” we need to look at more than just profits. It is likely that the business owner will have to reinvest any “income over outgo” in the business for some period. This reinvestment must be considered when evaluating the success of the business. For example, the consumer may say that they *are* not making any money from the business. Yet, a review of the books will show that $1,000 a month of income has been put back into the business. We would count this $1,000 as income when evaluating the business.

***End Guidance***

**Section VIII Supported Self Employment**

1. DVR supports self-employment as a viable option for consumers served through supported employment programs for adults with developmental disabilities or psychiatric disabilities. **The requirements for supported employment plans that include self-employment are the same as for all VR cases. Supported employment consumers must have the same opportunity and access to pursue self-employment as any other VR consumer.**
2. Supported self-employment must meet all the requirements of competitive integrated employment as outlined in the definitions section of this chapter. In considering whether to support an IPE for supported self-employment, the DVR counselor must consider:
   1. Does the consumer own/control the business in a meaningful way or do agency staff or family members direct the business?
   2. Does the business offer genuine opportunities for interaction with vendors, customers, and other professionals without disabilities?
   3. Is the person is earning income comparable to others without disabilities performing similar tasks and in similar occupations with similar training, experience, and skills.

**ATTACHMENT A.**

**Self-Employment Handout**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Customer’s Role:**

The potential business owner is responsible for:

* Deciding what business to pursue
* Conducting a feasibility study
* Developing a business plan after the feasibility study has been approved
* Obtaining necessary permits, licenses, and insurances
* Enlisting support from family and friends
* Securing business start-up funds
* Developing customers
* Locating supplies
* Starting the business

**The DVR Counselor’s Role:**

In addition to the counseling relationship, the counselor’s role includes:

* Explaining the role of DVR, the consumer, and any other organizations involved in the self-employment process
* Clearly communicating the self-employment process that will be followed including how agency decisions will be made for pursuing self-employment.
* Communicating whether and how the agency will help with training, developing a business plan, and DVR funding of the business
* Helping the consumer decide which business to pursue
* Deciding which assessments, if any, will be used
* Guiding the feasibility study, interpreting feasibility study, and assessment results to determine whether to proceed
* Supporting the consumer and being the liaison between the consumer and consultants

**The Business Consultant’s Role:**

* Guides the consumer through the business plan process, but does not write the plan
* Recommends potential funding sources
* May help assemble a funding package
* Prepares the consumer for meeting potential funders
* Suggests marketing strategies
* May make recommendations on the viability of the feasibility study and the proposed business

**ATTACHMENT B.**

**Self-Employment Self-Assessment**

**Beginning to Develop Your Business Plan**

Answer the following questions in writing for review with your DVR counselor. For some questions, you may need to talk to business owners or do some research at the library. Your answers will help both you and your DVR counselor clarify your business idea. Your answers are the beginning of your Business Plan and may help your DVR counselor determine whether you and Vocational Rehabilitation should work together toward the goal of self-employment.

1. What business would you like to start?

2. Who will use your service and/or buy your product(s)?

3. Where are your customers located?

4. How many customers do you think you will have during the first year? During the second year? What assumptions did you use to develop these estimates?

5. How much money do you think you will make during the first year? During the second year? Show the items and amounts used to calculate these amounts.

6. How will you tell potential customers about your business?

7. Is there another business like the one you want to open operating in the area you want to serve? Is it successful? Why or why not?

8. Why do you want to start this type of business?

9. What qualifications do you already have for running this business?

10. What will you need to learn to be able to operate this business?

11. Will you hire employees? What skills should they have? How much will you pay them?

12. If you were a potential customer, why would you use this business?

13. If you were a customer, what features would keep you coming back?

14. Who will do the ordering, customer contact, and bookkeeping for your business?

15. What hours and days will you operate?

16. Where will your business be located?

17. What equipment will you need? Do you need it right away? If not, when will you need it? Do you need to own it, or can you rent it?

18. Will your disability pose any barriers to your operating this business? If yes, what are they? What are your ideas for overcoming these barriers?

19. What is your current credit score? Will your affect your ability to borrow money and raise capital for your business? Have you ever declared bankruptcy?

20. How much money will you need to start the business? How much money can you contribute? Who can loan you money? What do you think are likely sources of money for starting your business?

**Self-Employment Handout C.**

**Monthly Personal and Living Expenses**

Enter actual expenses for the past 4 months from your records and keep track of expenses for this and the next month. Label the months in the spaces provided at the top of the table.

Month and Total Note: Unable to cut and paste grid.

**Dwelling:**

Rent Payment

House Payment

Property Tax House

Repair

Miscellaneous Expenses (lawn mowing, cleaning, snow shoveling)

Homeowner’s Association Dues

Insurance

Furniture/Appliance Payments

**Transportation**

Car payment(s)

Other Vehicle Payment(s)

Insurance

Fuel

License(s)

Public Transportation

**Utilities**

Telephone

Gas

Water

Trash

**Personal**

Groceries

Dining Out

Entertainment

Tobacco Products

Medical/Dental/Vision Insurance

Clothing

Laundry/Dry Cleaning

Med./Dental/Vision Hospital Expenses

Prescriptions

Credit Card Payments

Loan Payments

Pets

Education

Dues & Subscriptions

Gifts

Donations

Travel

Cable TV

Hobbies/Crafts

Music

Personal Assistant

Assistive technology Purchase, payments & maintenance

Internet Access

Other:

**Totals** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Average Expenses per Month (Total / 6 months) $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Sources of Income:

Source Amount per Month

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_