



Vocational Rehabilitation Orientation

State Rehabilitation Council

Full Council Meeting February 1, 2018

VR The Basics for New and Veteran Members





Broad Overview



- VR is a relatively simple program from a regulatory perspective
- It has a clear goal, employment for people with disabilities
- It is a voluntary program...nobody can be required to participate (unlike many state/federal programs)
- Services provided can be very flexible as long as they support an employment outcome
- VR cannot have mandated spending limits on individual consumer services



Overview of VR Steps or Statuses and Timelines

- Application
- Eligibility determination (must be within 60 days of application with some exceptions)
- Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) (must be within 90 days of eligibility with some exceptions)
- Annual review of IPE to make sure it is working and current (plan generally must be for 6 months or more, no maximum timeline)
- Closure with an employment outcome (must be working 90 days and meet additional criteria)
- Closure without an employment outcome



Eligibility Basics



1. Person must have disability that is a substantial impediment to employment
2. Person requires VR services to gain, retain, advance in or regain employment
 - ▶ Applicants are presumed to meet number 2 unless VR can show they cannot benefit from services
3. Social Security SSI/SSDI beneficiaries are categorically eligible
4. Regardless of the above the applicant must intend to achieve an employment outcome
5. Vermont has no means test for VR eligibility. Federal law does allow it



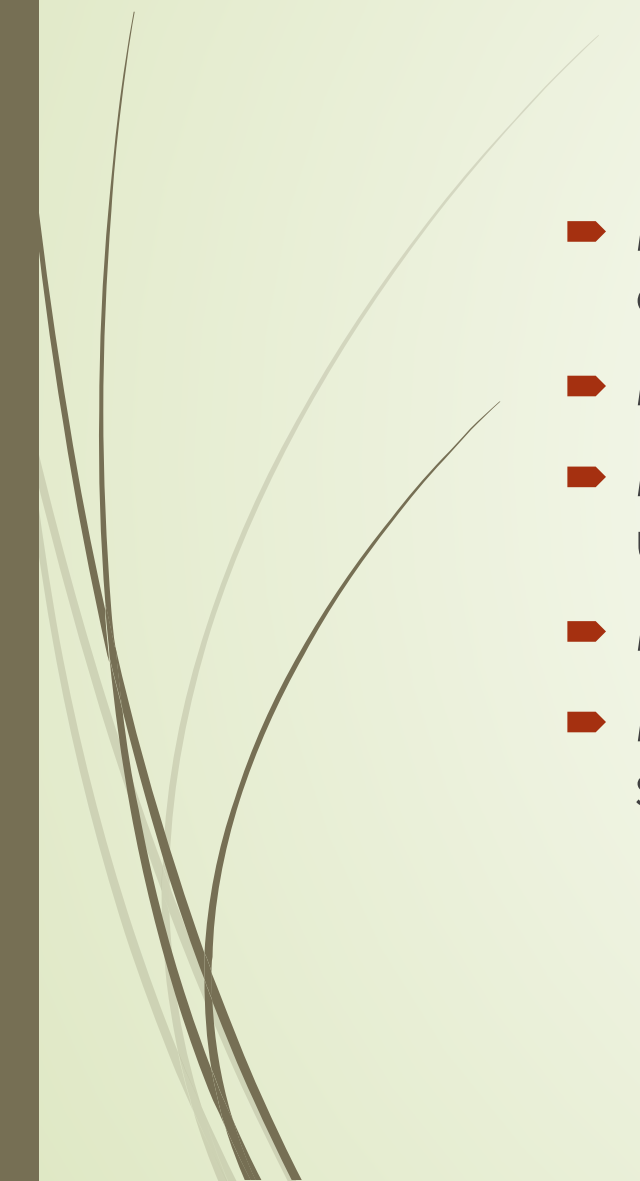
Order of Selection



- ▶ If a state does not have sufficient funds to serve everyone who is eligible they can have an Order of Selection.
- ▶ An Order of Selection is a mechanism to ensure VR services individuals with the most severe disabilities before serving individuals with less severe disabilities
- ▶ Vermont has a four level order of selection. Currently the first three levels are open. VR must consult with the SRC quarterly on opening the Order to serve the fourth level.



Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

- ▶ Must happen as quickly as possible but no later than 90 days (unless consumer and counselor agree to specific extension).
 - ▶ Must be based on comprehensive assessment
 - ▶ Must be consistent with consumers informed choices as well as their unique strengths and abilities
 - ▶ Must outline specific services
 - ▶ Must outline costs to VR for services (we should not pay for something that is not in the plan).
- 



Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

Things to Note

- VR and the consumer must agree on the plan. VR does not have to support a plan they believe is unrealistic or inappropriate
- Virtually anything can be included in a plan if it supports an employment goal
- VR cannot set maximum spending limits (some VR plans cost \$100,000 or more, others very little)
- VR can set spending guidelines but they cannot be absolute



VR Closure

- ▶ Employment Closure:
 - ▶ Individual has achieved employment goal outlined in plan
 - ▶ Worked for 90 days plus
 - ▶ Consumer and VR counselor agree outcome is satisfactory
 - ▶ Identified any post employment services needed to retain employment



VR Closure

- ▶ VR closure without an employment outcome
 - ▶ VR must contact prior to closure
 - ▶ VR must provide the consumer their appeal rights if they want to dispute the closure
 - ▶ Generally consumers and counselors mutually agree to close a case and/or consumers disengage



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- ▶ WIOA Required VR agencies to set aside 15% of the federal award for Pre-ETS for Eligible Students
- ▶ Students are broadly defined as high school students and college students ages 14 to 21
 - ▶ On an IEP
 - ▶ On a 504 Plan or eligible to be on a 504 Plan
- ▶ To get Pre-ETS services students don't have to apply to the core VR program



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- ▶ Pre-ETS Services are defined as:
- ▶ Job exploration counseling;
- ▶ Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school, after school, or community-based opportunities;
- ▶ Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at IHEs;
- ▶ Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- ▶ Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- ▶ To implement Pre-ETS Services DVR
- ▶ Assigned 13.5 FTE Transition Counselors to work exclusively with students
- ▶ Contracted for 13 VABIR Youth Employment Specialists to partner the Transition Counselors
- ▶ Partnered with VCIL to provide self advocacy supports
- ▶ Partnered with VFN to help with student/family engagement



VR Special Programs



- ▶ Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Provides EAP services to Vermonters statewide and provides some VR services (mostly assessment and short term counseling).
- ▶ Linking Learning to Careers (LLC): A federal demonstration to provide work based learning and post secondary education opportunities for students with disabilities
- ▶ Assistive Technology Project (AT): Provides AT training and consultation statewide
- ▶ Benefits Counseling: Provides counseling for SSI/SSDI beneficiaries to help them negotiate the transition from benefits to work



VR By The Numbers

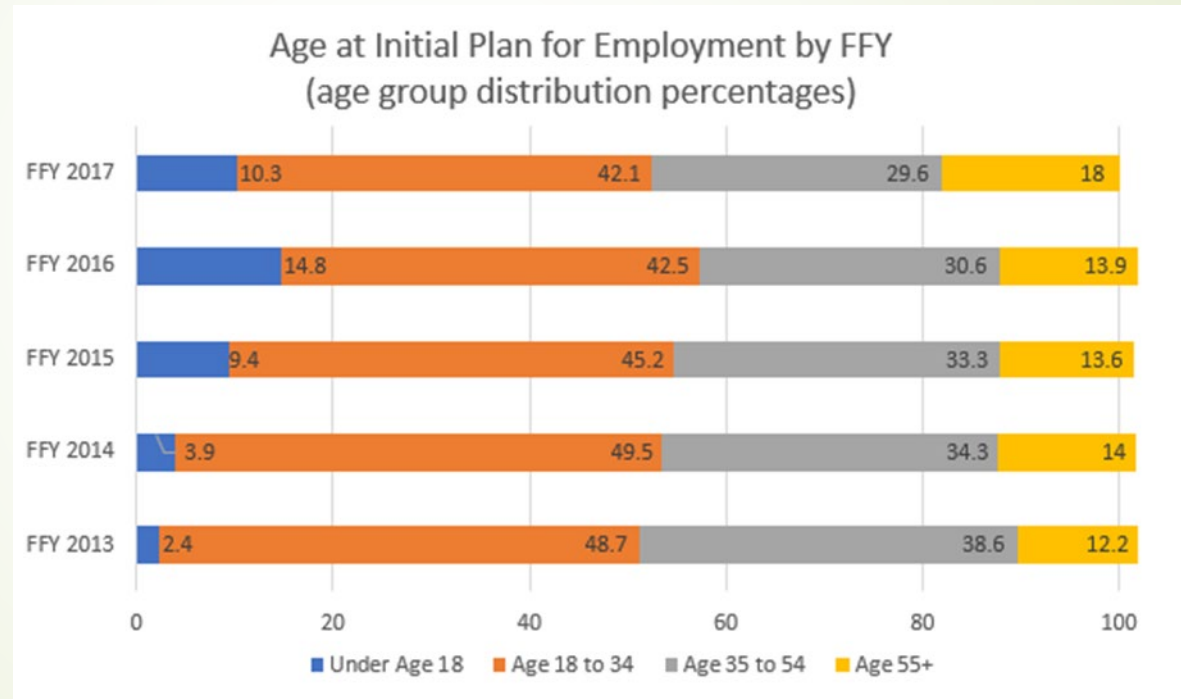
- ▶ Total VR Staff 121.5 FTEs including:
- ▶ 40 FTE Young Adult and Adult VR Counselors (Providing Core VR Services)
- ▶ 13.5 FTE Transition Counselors (Providing Pre-ETS and Core VR Services)
- ▶ 4 Benefits Counselors
- ▶ 7 VR Regional Managers
- ▶ 17 Program Techs and Admin Support Staff
- ▶ VR Director and 6 Senior Managers
- ▶ 12 EAP Managers and Staff
- ▶ 10 Linking Learning to Careers Staff
- ▶ 3 Business Account Managers (the other 7 BAMS are contracted)



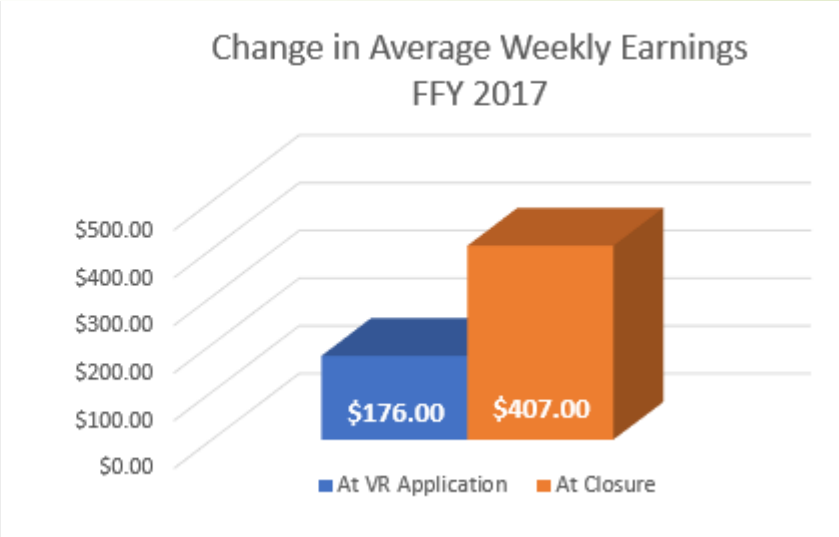
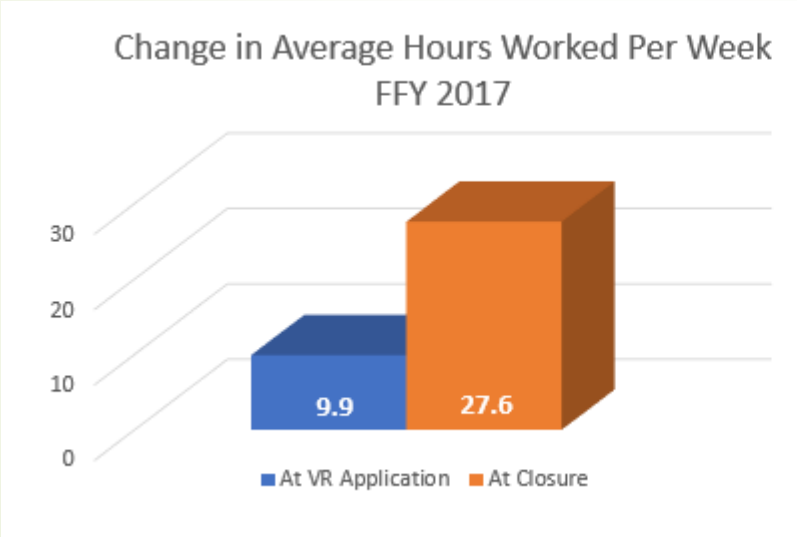
VR By The Numbers

- ▶ In State Fiscal Year 2017
 - ▶ 9,077 Individuals were served
 - ▶ 8,177 People served in the core VR program
 - ▶ 900 High school students served through Pre-Employment Transition Services only
 - ▶ 1,287 People served in the core VR program were closed in a successful employment status

VR Age Distribution



Earnings and Wages at VR Closure



Questions?



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#)