Who Are We and What Can We Do in Schools?
NHVR Mission Statement

To assist eligible NH citizens with disabilities to secure suitable employment and financial and personal independence by providing rehabilitation services.
In collaboration with schools, NHVR will assist eligible transitioning students to enter the world of work, complete his or her educational goals as they relate to employment, and obtain employment skills to meet the needs of employers.
Keys to our Philosophy

- Self determination
- Informed choice
- Knowledge of self and knowledge of the world of work leads to the matching of the appropriate type of work and environment
Quick NHVR Facts

- NHVR is a statewide, federal and state funded program that has been in existence for over 90 years.
- There are seven regional offices around the state, with the administration offices in Concord, including services for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, and blind and visually impaired.
- 27 counselors provide transition services in 70+ schools, serving appx. 1100-1300 students per year.
- 4 counselors provide expertise in the rehabilitation of customers with blindness or visual impairments (SBVI).
- 3 counselors provide expertise in the area of hearing loss.
NH Vocational Rehabilitation

- Berlin
- Concord & Administrative Office
- Keene
- Lebanon
- Manchester
- Nashua
- Portsmouth

Regional Offices
Service Area
About NHVR

- Most counselors live in the area they cover and are familiar with their communities.
- An excellent resource for employers, schools, agencies and persons with disabilities on how disability affects employment.
In Fiscal year 2012, Vocational Rehabilitation successfully closed the cases of 1,075 NH citizens with disabilities who obtained employment or returned to work.
Who is Eligible?

- Any individual with a physical or mental impairment

- The impairment for that individual constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to *employment*

- And that individual requires and would benefit from vocational rehabilitation services to overcome employment impediments to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain *gainful employment*
  - Employment, for VR, is in an integrated and competitive setting
What is a Disability?

- A physical impairment
- An emotional/psychiatric impairment
- A learning disability
- A sensory impairment, such as blindness or hearing loss
What Documentation is Needed?

- Existing medical documentation signed by a qualified representative, as appropriate to the disability (MD, licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, SAIF, certified substance abuse counselor, etc)
Evidence that the individual is receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) which substantiates the disability and a substantial impediment to employment

An Individual Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan, although it contains helpful information, is NOT documentation of a disability for VR
Substantial impediments/barriers to employment?

- The individual is unable to learn or complete work tasks either from jobs in their work history, or from tasks found in entry level jobs in the community.
- The individual is unable to prepare for the job; communicate appropriately or effectively with the employer, coworkers, or customers; or has been unable to keep a job due to disability.
- The individual’s work behaviors are impediments to employment, i.e., chronic tardiness, poor attendance, poor hygiene, inability to get along with coworkers.
Key VR Services

- Vocational guidance and counseling
- Career exploration
- Job seeking and keeping skills services
- Specific job training
- Job placement
- Job Analysis
- Rehabilitation technology, accommodations, and/or modifications
- Technical assistance regarding disability impact on specific job
Important Things to Remember

- An educational barrier does not always mean there is an employment barrier

- Some students who are not coded may be eligible for VR services

- Family income does not impact eligibility, but is considered for services in the Individual Plan for Employment

- VR is **NOT** an entitlement program, it is an eligibility and voluntary program
Referral Process for Students

HOW SHOULD IT WORK???
Who Should be Referred?

- Students who have:
  - A physical impairment
  - A learning disability
  - An emotional or psychiatric impairment
  - A sensory impairment
## Who Can Refer?

- Students
- Parents
- Teachers
- Guidance Counselors
- School Nurses
- Special Education staff
- Psychologists
- Therapists
- Case managers
- Other agencies (DCYF, etc)
When to refer?

- Beginning of the Junior year or age 16 (two years prior to graduation or exit)

- Youth at risk of dropping out of school (as early as 14-15 years old)

- If a possible referral doesn’t fit the “typical” categories, please call your VR counselor to discuss the individual circumstances

**NOTE:** Students placed “out of district” are typically served by the regional office that serves the *sending* school district
VR Procedures Upon Referral

- VR counselors are available in each regional office to serve transition students
- VR counselor schedules initial meeting with referral sources
- Referral source provides demographic information along with current school records
- VR counselor contacts student/parent
- VR counselor reviews application materials
- VR determines eligibility and/or need for further assessment
Individualized Plan for Employment

DEVELOPING THE IPE
The Individualized Plan for Employment

- The Plan for employment must be jointly developed and agreed upon by the student and VR counselor.

- The plan must include:
  - Work Goal
  - Objectives and Services to reach the work goal
When is the Plan developed?

- The Plan is individualized based on a student’s need and employment goal, after a period of comprehensive assessment.

- The plan is created as soon as the counselor and the student determine an appropriate employment goal, with completion by the date of graduation.
Other considerations in Plan development

- Individualized Employment Planning
- Flexibility
- Age of Majority/Confidentiality
- Coordination with other agencies
- Time Limited
- Link to the IEP/transition plan
  - Consider current IEP goals and objectives
    - Expand this knowledge to the world of work
  - Build on what has been accomplished
  - The IPE is not completed at an IEP meeting
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<th>Example Services</th>
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<td>That do not require financial need evaluation</td>
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- Career guidance and counseling
- Information on employment trends
- Job seeking/keeping skills
- On the job training
- Advocacy, information, and referral to other community services
- Participation in student’s transition process
### Example Services
Based on Financial need of student/family

- Adaptive equipment
- College/Course work
- Employment training
- Uniforms
- Tools
- Driver’s education
- Transportation
Remember........

- All services offered are based on the individual’s need and employment goal!

- VR is required to investigate comparable benefits and services, and is to provide the most appropriate and cost effective services!
How Can VR Fit into the Transition Picture?

WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD A COMMON GOAL....POSTSECONDARY EMPLOYMENT
Things to think about ...

- When a student is unsure of what he/she would like to do for employment, VR can provide guidance and tools that will assist in the development of an employment goal.
- VR can assist the student to figure out what their skills are and what types of support they might need to learn about a job and to keep their job.
- VR can provide technical, expert assistance to the student and their transition team around issues related to employment and disability.
Important Points to Remember!

- **DO** refer students to Voc. Rehab!
  - School should give family and student VR information and then contact VR transition counselor informing them of the referral (preferably in writing)
  - Student and family need to APPLY for VR services
  - VR needs parental permission (for those under 18) to contact students and share info with school
  - VR will often need case manager and school support to contact family

- **After information has been shared with family AND the transition counselor has been notified (preferably in writing) check off the box on the IEP that says team referred to NHVR**
More Important Points

- **DO NOT** promise services in the IEP that are to be delivered and funded by VR without VR being contacted, attending the meeting, and approving the service
  - Often, even though referral is made, the student/family does not follow through, fails to apply, or decides they do not want VR assistance
  - Remember.....VR is voluntary
- **DO invite** VR to IEP meetings where the transition plan and postsecondary employment/training goals will be discussed, after first contacting family and VR (IEP meeting should **not** be the first contact)
- **DO NOT** make assumptions!
Questions?