



Arizona's Protection & Advocacy System

Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration Frequently Asked Questions about Evaluations

1. May AzRSA require me to participate in an evaluation to receive vocational rehabilitation (VR) services?

Yes, if the evaluation(s) is necessary to determine your eligibility for VR services, identify your rehabilitation needs, or determine an employment goal or the nature and scope of rehabilitation services to be included in develop your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Eligibility. To determine eligibility, you may be asked to participate in an evaluation to obtain new or updated information about your disability. Evaluations may be unnecessary if you can provide VR current healthcare or behavioral healthcare records or you can authorize the VR counselor to obtain your records by signing a release of information. If VR is unable to verify that you have a disability or a need for VR services based on available records, you will be asked to participate in an evaluation. These evaluations may include diagnosing a physical or mental disability, hearing or visual loss, or a Traumatic Brain Injury.

Identifying Rehabilitation Needs. Evaluations may be needed to determine the amount and scope of VR services to be provided. For example, if a client is quadriplegic and intends to telework for a company translating documents, home workspace modification and assistive technology assessments may need to be done to determine if the client's rehabilitation needs include home and computer adaptations.

Determining an employment goal and developing the IPE. Once AzRSA finds you eligible, you may require an evaluation to identify an appropriate employment goal or the amount and type of vocational rehabilitation services you need to reach your employment goal. Evaluations may gather information about personality, interests, interpersonal skills, intelligence and related functional capacities, educational achievements, work experience, and vocational aptitudes, of the individual. They may also assess medical, psychiatric, psychological, and other pertinent vocational and educational factors that affect your employment success and rehabilitation needs. For example, if a client who is hard of hearing wishes to be a commercial truck driver, a hearing test may be necessary to determine if she meets the U.S. Department of Transportation's minimum hearing standards to qualify for a license once trained.

2. What are common types of evaluations used to evaluate eligibility determine rehabilitation needs and develop IPEs?

- Psychological Examination – evaluates academic functioning, intellectual capacities, adaptive functioning and behavioral health.
- Vocational Evaluation – evaluates employment-related skills, abilities and interests.
- Audiological Examination – evaluates hearing.
- Eye Examination – evaluates vision.
- Technology Assessment – evaluates need for assistive technology such as communication devices and wheelchairs.
- Home Modification Assessment – evaluates accessibility of your home, such as ramps, wider doorways, and lighting.
- Computer Access Evaluation – hardware and software adaptations.

- Workstation Evaluation – evaluating accessibility and functionality of a workstation to identify equipment, changes to improve workplace performance.
- Physical Examination – a general medical evaluation.
- Functional Capacities Evaluation – evaluates an individual’s capacity to perform work activities related to his or her participation in employment looking at the individual's health status, body functions and structures and the demands of the job and the work environment.
- Neuro-educational Evaluation – evaluates an individual’s abilities and service needs to be successful in post-secondary education or a training program. This evaluation should also identify education-related accommodations the individual may need.

3. May I choose the evaluator?

Yes. You have the right to choose the evaluator from a list of approved evaluators contracting with AzRSA.

Your VR counselor must provide you with a written list of the evaluators that includes information about the evaluators’ credentials. If you don’t know any of the names on the list, you can do your own research before making your choice. You can ask your VR counselor for information about the evaluators, such as complaints, results of client satisfaction surveys, or names of consumer groups who may have given input to RSA about an evaluator. You may check the evaluator’s website, licensing agencies’ website and publicly available healthcare ratings or grades by other patients.

If, after reviewing RSA’s list and doing your research, you would prefer a different evaluator, you can tell your VR Counselor the preferred evaluator’s name and the reasons you prefer this evaluator. AzRSA will ask that they become a qualified vendor to be eligible for payment.

4. May I refuse to participate in an evaluation requested by AzRSA?

You are not required to participate in any evaluations requested by AzRSA. However, if you refuse an evaluation that AzRSA believes is necessary to determine your eligibility, identify your rehabilitation needs or develop your IPE, the agency may close your VR case for lack of cooperation or participation. Case closure is an agency action that you can appeal. For more information about your appeal rights, go to ACDL's Guide: Your Appeal Rights for Disputes about AZRSA Services.



Before refusing to participate in an evaluation, discuss AzRSA's reasons for the evaluation with your counselor and their supervisor. Before trying to persuade AzRSA not to require the evaluation, you should consider whether the evaluation will offer you any benefits. For example, the evaluation may identify possible academic accommodations and modifications or outline why part-time employment or studies is a disability-related need. Evaluations may identify specific assistive technology that would help you reach your employment outcome. If after considering the benefits you believe an evaluation is unnecessary, present your reasons why the evaluation is unnecessary and provide any current information or data from other sources that addresses eligibility or rehabilitation needs. RSA must review and weigh all information you present.

If your evaluation or medical documentation is more than three years old, RSA will likely need updated assessments. If AzRSA insists on the evaluation, explore whether there is a compromise, such as a limited evaluation.

5. Must AzRSA share the evaluation with me?

Yes. Generally, AzRSA must share the evaluation with you. Often, AzRSA will schedule a face-to-face meeting between you, your VR counselor and the evaluator to review the evaluation. AzRSA is

required to release records that may be potentially harmful to an applicant or client only through a third-party who can assist the individual in appropriately interpreting the evaluation information. The third-party source should be chosen by or agreed to by the applicant or client. The evaluator can also produce a summary version for the client that does not contain the information deemed harmful.

6. Must AzRSA treat the evaluation as a confidential record?

Yes, the evaluation is a confidential record as a part of your VR file. The evaluation may only be used to determine eligibility, identify your rehabilitation needs or develop your IPE. The evaluation cannot be shared with other government agencies providing you services unless you provide written authorization. The evaluation may not be provided to a family member, except for the parent of a client who is a minor or the guardian of a client under guardianship. Keep in mind if you have authorized an individual to act as your representative during the VR process and have authorized access to information, your authorized representative will also have access to the evaluation.

7. May I receive other VR services during the evaluation process?

The answer depends on the reason for the evaluation. If you are being evaluated for eligibility, you will not receive other VR services during the evaluation process. If you have an approved IPE and a specific rehabilitation need is being evaluated, you may receive other unrelated VR services. For example, a client who has low vision and is pursuing a career in massage therapy will not be entitled to computer training and software until the AT evaluation is done that identifies necessary software and equipment. However, he could still receive other VR services, such as large print test materials for studying for his licensing exams and job development services.

8. May I receive a reasonable modification or auxiliary aid or service if needed during an evaluation?

Yes. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), both AzRSA and evaluators must provide reasonable modifications and auxiliary aids and services for you to have an equal opportunity during the

evaluation. A reasonable modification is a change in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination based on disability. An auxiliary aid or service is making information available in an accessible format for people with sensory disabilities for effective communication. Reasonable modifications and auxiliary aids and services are not required where it would fundamentally alter the service.

Examples of reasonable modifications and auxiliary aids and services include:

- Extended test-taking time
- ASL interpreter
- Large print test materials or Zoom Text
- Braille test materials
- Reader
- Scribe to record answers
- Alternative accessible location for the evaluation
- Scheduled breaks during assessment

If there is an additional cost for providing a reasonable modification or auxiliary aid or service, RSA and/or the evaluator is responsible for the cost. RSA and the evaluator should have an agreement that covers who pays for reasonable modifications and auxiliary aids and services. Any dispute about which agency is responsible for the cost must not result in a delay of the evaluation.



Troubleshooting Problems in the VR Evaluation Process

Problem

My VR Counselor told me to go

Self-advocacy steps

You have the right to select a qualified evaluator

Problem

Self-advocacy steps

<p>to a specific evaluator or agency for an evaluation.</p>	<p>from AzRSA's list of contract providers.</p> <p>Ask for a copy of the list of contract providers.</p> <p>If your VR Counselor does not provide you a list of qualified evaluators, you may ask for help to address the issue by calling:</p> <p>VR Supervisor → VR Program Manager → RSA Ombudsman → DES Ombudsman.</p>
<p>I would prefer a different evaluator than is on the RSA's list of qualified providers.</p>	<p>Check if the preferred evaluator is qualified to perform the type of evaluation that needs to be done.</p> <p>Ask your VR counselor to check with the preferred evaluator to see if they will accept the standard provider rate.</p> <p>If not, determine the difference in the rates and whether there may be a secondary payer, such as your insurance that will pay the difference.</p>
<p>It is taking months for VR to arrange an evaluation.</p>	<p>Once an evaluator is approved, you may contact the evaluator and set up your appointment.</p> <p>If your VR Counselor takes an unreasonable amount of time to approve the evaluation, you may ask for help to address the delay by calling:</p> <p>VR Supervisor → VR Program Manager → RSA Ombudsman → DES Ombudsman.</p>
<p>VR refuses to provide me with a copy of the evaluation.</p>	<p>Generally, you are entitled to a copy of your VR file, including evaluations.</p> <p>However, VR may not provide a copy of evaluations or portions of evaluations that may be potentially harmful to a client or applicant.</p> <p>If AzRSA believes the evaluation or a portion of it will be harmful they must provide it to a third party-source who can appropriately interpret the</p>

Problem	Self-advocacy steps
	<p>evaluation information.</p> <p>You may choose the third-party source, such as a family member, counselor, therapist, or doctor.</p>
<p>VR is making decisions about my case based on an evaluation that I don't believe is accurate.</p>	<p>If you believe there is inaccurate information in your evaluation, you can provide the evaluator and VR with accurate information and ask them to reconsider their decision.</p> <p>For example, if a functional capacity examination concludes that a client's physical capacity is not suitable for dentistry because she cannot stand for 4-5 hours daily, the client could provide information showing most tasks performed by a dentist can be performed sitting.</p> <p>If VR makes an adverse decision about eligibility, the contents of the IPE, or case closure based on an evaluation, a client may appeal the decision using the client appeal rights.</p>
<p>I need an ASL interpreter for my evaluation and neither VR nor the evaluator will pay for it.</p>	<p>Ask the evaluator in writing for the ASL interpreter.</p> <p>If the evaluator denies it, notify your VR counselor in writing and ask VR to provide it or require the evaluator to provide it.</p> <p>If VR does not arrange for the ASL interpreter, ask for help with the following agencies:</p> <p>RSA Ombudsman → DES ADA Coordinator</p> <p>If you do not receive a prompt and positive response, you may file discrimination complaints against the evaluator and VR.</p>

If these troubleshooting steps don't work, please contact ACDL for rights information or advocacy services.