



Arizona's Protection & Advocacy System

Frequently Asked Questions: Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Your Vocational Rehabilitation Rights

1. What VR services must AzRSA provide?

AzRSA must provide vocational rehabilitation services that are necessary to reach your employment outcome. An employment outcome is to obtain, maintain, advance in, or retain full-time or, if appropriate, part-time competitive integrated employment. Competitive integrated employment includes supported employment, customized employment, self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership. The employment outcome that you select must be consistent with your unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

2. What types of VR services are available?

Under federal law, there are many possible VR services to help clients prepare for, find, keep, or regain competitive integrated employment. AzRSA must provide those VR services that are necessary to reach the employment outcome. Here are the specific services listed in federal law.

VR Services	Examples
Assessments by qualified personnel to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs	Psycho-educational evaluation, neuropsychological examination, assistive technology exam

VR Services	Examples
Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance	Vocational counseling, vocational adjustment services
Information and referral to other agencies for services not available under VR laws	
Job-related services	Job development, placement assistance, job retention services, follow along services.
Vocational and training services or advanced training in fields, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics (including computer science), medicine, law, or business	Books, tools, training materials and tuition or training costs after grants have been applied.
Physical and mental restorative services to correct or modify a slow progressing or stable physical or mental condition to eliminate or reduce barrier to employment <i>if not available through other sources</i>	Corrective surgery, prosthetic and orthotic devices, eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dental services
Maintenance	Temporary housing or dorm costs while living away from home to attend training
Transportation	Bus pass, bus training, mileage, driver training, and specialized transportation services (taxi, Lyft or Uber)
Personal assistance services	

VR Services	Examples
Sign language interpreter services and reader services	
Rehabilitation teaching services and orientation and mobility services	
Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies	Mechanics tools, testing fees, license application fees, supplies to open business
Technical assistance for pursuing telecommuting, self-employment, or small business operation	
Rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices	Van modification, augmentative communication device, braille printer
Transition services for students with disabilities	Independent living skills training, bus training, social skills development
Pre-employment transition services	Work exploration activities, self-advocacy training
Supported employment services	Job coach, personal care at work
Services to the family of an individual with a disability necessary to assist the individual to achieve an employment outcome	
Post-employment services to retain, regain, or advance in employment	Continuing education to meet a new employment criterion

VR Services

Examples

Other goods and services determined necessary for the individual with a disability to achieve an employment outcome.	
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3. Do I have to pay for my VR services?

Based on your individual financial resources, AzRSA may require you to pay all or a portion of some of your VR services. However, the following services are available to you and all eligible VR clients, regardless of your financial resources at no cost to you:

- assessments
- vocational counseling, guidance, including IPE planning and development, and referral services
- job search and placement services
- adjustment to disability services
- personal assistance services
- auxiliary aid or service, including sign language interpreter services

Most likely other VR services, except the ones mentioned in the above question, would be provided based on financial/economic need.

4. How does AzRSA decide if I must pay for VR services?

Under Arizona law, income is considered for receipt of all other services (not listed above). AzRSA will pay for additional services if the individual meets an economic needs test. Economic need is determined as part of the IPE process prior to initiating services. Income from every family member is counted if they were claimed on the federal tax return of the person's income used to determine economic need. Because many types of income are not received in a monthly sum, all income must be changed to a monthly figure. Then any disability-related expenses are subtracted from the client's monthly income. If the client's gross monthly income minus disability-related expenses is less than the amount on the VR economic need

chart, a client meets financial eligibility. Take a look at the economic need chart in [RSA's Policy Manual, Chapter 7](#).

5. Is there any income that is not counted when considering financial need?

Yes. Some income is not counted. No income received as benefits under Title II (Social Security Disability Insurance) or Title XVI (Supplemental Security Income) of the Social Security Act are counted. VR also does not count the dollar amounts of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or any portion of educational grants and scholarships used to pay for tuition, books, and supplies.

6. Are any of my expenses taken into consideration when determining financial need?

Yes. Any financial needs test must consider disability-related expenses. Disability-related expenses are any extra costs you have because of your disability that are not covered or paid for by another source. Examples include out-of-pocket costs for medications, hearing aids, low vision products, wheelchair repairs, specialized transportation costs, special dietary needs, and treatment or equipment. If you have disability-related expenses, these need to be deducted from your monthly income before determining your financial need.

7. What can I do if I do not meet the economic needs guideline but I cannot afford to pay for a necessary VR service?

Arizona cannot legally adopt financial need guidelines that are so high as to effectively deny you a necessary service. Check first if the economic need test was properly applied. Review the calculation with AzRSA and look closely at the following:

- A. Is this service one that requires financial participation?
- B. Is only countable income considered?

C. Is a family member's income considered when you are not dependent upon them?

D. Did VR consider all disability-related expenses?

If AzRSA did not correctly do the math, ask that the calculation be redone.

If AzRSA did the math correctly and you are still ineligible, then you may be required to pay a portion of the cost. If you cannot afford a service that VR would normally be required to provide to you, contact ACDL for more information about your rights in this area.

8. When must I look to a different agency to provide a service before AzRSA becomes responsible?

AzRSA is the payer of last resort for many services. This means that the general rule is that AzRSA will not pay for a service if there is a *comparable service or benefit* available to you from another governmental agency. For example, if you qualify for attendant care through Arizona Long Term Care Services (ALTCS), AzRSA will not pay for the attendant care available through ALTCS. However, AzRSA cannot refuse to pay for additional attendant care needed to go to a job interview.

There are some situations in which AzRSA cannot require you to first look to another agency for the service.

AzRSA cannot deny a service, if waiting for the comparable benefit by the other agency would:

- interrupt or delay your progress toward achieving an employment outcome;
- delay an immediate job placement; or
- you are at extreme medical risk without this service.

AzRSA cannot require you to obtain comparable benefits for assessments to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation

needs, VR counseling, referral services, job placement services, rehabilitation technology and Post-employment services. Those VR services are available without consideration of availability of comparable benefits.

Under federal law, AzRSA must develop a complete plan with all public agencies providing VR services, including Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (Or AHCCCS—Arizona’s Medicaid alternative), public colleges, and partners in the workforce investment systems. Partners in the workforce investment system include but are not limited to One Stop Centers and Job Corps. If appropriate, your IPE by qualified personnel must include how the agencies will work together.

If there is a comparable benefit that exists and is available at the right time, you must use those services. However, if there is a comparable benefit, but it is not available when needed, AzRSA must provide the service until the comparable benefit becomes available. If another state or federal law requires a different agency to pay for the service and that agency is not providing the service, then AzRSA must provide the service but may try and get reimbursed by the responsible agency.

9. What do I do if I disagree with the amount or type of VR services AzRSA is willing to provide?

If you disagree with either the amount or type of VR services that AzRSA is willing to provide, you can appeal the decision. For more information about your appeal rights, see the Center’s guide, *Your Appeal Rights for Disputes about Vocational Rehabilitation Services*.

10. Do I have a choice of service providers?

Yes, you have the right to select a service provider of your choice from VR’s list of contracted vendors. You must be provided information to assist in making informed choices about what service providers are available to provide the specific services you may need. This information should be thorough so that you can make an appropriate selection of the service provider that will best meet your unique needs.

If you choose a provider who is not a VR vendor, you will need to prove to VR that none of its vendors can meet your disability-related needs. With enough proof, VR may be willing to provide you with funds to pay the provider of your choice. VR may also be willing to let you use this provider if you are willing to pay the difference in rates. If VR denies your request to go outside its vendor list, you can appeal this decision.

11. What do I do if I am dissatisfied with the services of a service provider being paid for by AzRSA?

You should immediately inform your counselor of your dissatisfaction with a service or lack of service from a provider. You should provide a thorough explanation to your counselor regarding why you are dissatisfied with a service or service provider. Your counselor should immediately attempt to fix this problem. If you are still dissatisfied, you should make a request to change to another provider if such provider is available.

If you are dissatisfied with a counselor's actions or lack of action concerning the provision of services from a provider, you have a right to an appeal. You must be informed by AzRSA about your appeal rights. For more information about your appeal rights, see the Center's guide, *Your Appeal Rights for Disputes about Vocational Rehabilitation Services*.

12. Can AzRSA reduce, stop or suspend my VR services without my consent?

Yes. AzRSA can reduce, stop, or suspend your VR services without your consent. However, AzRSA must first provide you with written notice which explains the decision, the reason for the decision, and your appeal rights. If you file a timely appeal, then AzRSA **cannot** reduce, stop or suspend your VR services (except in unusual cases where they believe you obtained your VR services through fraud) until the appeal is concluded. For more information about your appeal rights, see the Center's guide, *Your Appeal Rights for Disputes about Vocational Rehabilitation Services*.