

LRS CHAPTER 4, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & GUIDANCE MANUAL

 LOUISIANA WORKFORCE COMMISSION <small>The Department of Labor</small>	Part 408	Name Vocational Guidance and Counseling for Career Planning	Effective Date *April 2, 2019**
	Authorization *Federal Register, Volume 81, Department of Education, 34 CFR 361, Part VI, State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, §361.48 and §361.52.**		

NOTE: Refer to Chapter 4, Subsection 412.2 for information on Guidance/Counseling during service delivery.

I. BEST PRACTICES FOR COUNSELORS

The one-to-one relationship between a consumer and a Counselor is the foundation of the vocational rehabilitation program. The services provided by LRS receive their focus and fulfill the mission of the vocational rehabilitation program only through the guidance and counseling provided by the rehabilitation counselor.

Vocational guidance and career counseling are considered the most important services rendered a consumer. The rehabilitation counselor's individual style or modality will vary according to educational background, experience and personal uniqueness. Common in all successful counseling, however, lie similar components of attitude and function on the part of the Counselor. The expertise of the Counselor necessarily fosters mutual confidence, faith, trust and assurance where the consumer is concerned. The relationship should result in a basic mutual honesty, truthfulness, and fairness which leave no doubt as to the sincerity of the two parties involved.

Guidance and counseling must be provided along with another service(s) in order to document that the consumer has received substantial services at the time of successful case closure. Career counseling and vocational guidance are to vocational rehabilitation organizations what knowledge of production is to manufacturing organizations.

Counselors should provide advice and direction to help consumers develop the decision-making skills they need to make informed choices. If consumers are invested in making the choices relative to their employment goals and to the services leading to their employment goals, there will be an increased likelihood that the consumers will achieve economic, personal and social independence.

Rehabilitation counselors have a professional responsibility to look closely at their own commitment to enhance, develop, and improve their skills in providing career counseling and vocational guidance. As professionals, rehabilitation counselors need to attend to their own level of functioning. The most basic component of counseling and guidance is awareness of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Good interpersonal skills coupled with a knowledge and understanding of human communication are essential competencies for a rehabilitation counselor. Rehabilitation counselors, regardless of education or experience, should attend to this by looking for ways in which to improve

their proficiency in interpersonal communication and develop their capacity to appreciate the dynamics of human interaction and behavior. The Agency offers many in-service training opportunities and supports and encourages job-related graduate course work.

II. DEFINITION

A. Vocational Guidance

Vocational guidance is informed advice. Guidance is the giving or sharing of information relative to careers. Guidance is guiding.

Referring consumers for a vocational evaluation, for aptitude, achievement and/or interest testing, and explaining to the consumer the results of such testing is guidance. Helping consumers explore training opportunities at universities and community colleges and from community service providers is guidance.

B. Career Counseling

Career counseling is a structured, systematic interviewing and teaching process intended to help consumers discover and articulate their vocational interests and employment goals. Career counseling has as its aim identification of vocational goals and the construction of a plan to attain those goals. Career counseling normally tries to discover and take into account the consumer's values, interests, skills and social needs.

Assisting a consumer through a process that promotes identification, exploration and articulation of personal needs, desires, likes and dislikes is career counseling when these factors are explored in relationship to possible career choices.

III. EXAMPLES

A. Consumers who will benefit from vocational guidance.

For most consumers seeking services from vocational rehabilitation, vocational guidance will be appropriate and amply sufficient. For these individuals, the opportunity to explore their aptitudes, interests and achievement levels using psychometrics coupled with information about education, training options and the labor market will meet the consumer's career exploration needs. In other words, vocational evaluation results, ACT scores, and/or other measures of ability and aptitude can be used by the rehabilitation counselor to provide guidance. With such guidance, most consumers can and will make decisions in their own best interest.

B. Consumers who will benefit from career counseling generally can be identified in four broad groups:

1. People with self-image problems. People who seem, to the Counselor, to have more potential for growth than their presenting employment goal suggests. Career counseling can help these individuals view themselves and their potential more positively, in a healthier fashion.
2. People whose presenting employment goal is unrealistic. Hopefully, the counseling will be aimed at helping the individual find a realistic goal as satisfying as their unrealistic goal, but achievable. The counseling will be aimed at turning an almost certain failure into a success.
3. People who have no idea what they want to do and who articulate that.

These consumers are the easiest. They have identified that they need and want help. They are cooperative and motivated.

4. People who say, "I'll take anything". These individuals are not telling the truth. No one will "take anything". At least not for long. Everyone has values and deeply held beliefs developed in childhood. These beliefs are basic and for each individual define such issues as good from bad, desirable from undesirable, etc. These people are in most desperate need of career counseling. Their "I'll take anything" approach denotes not just desperation, but also vocational confusion. They are, however, the most difficult to interest in career counseling because generally they are urgently desperate for immediate employment. They need this service but may not be receptive to it because it takes time, and they perceive that they have no time.

C. An Approach to Career Counseling

One way to approach career counseling is to provide the consumer with a structured method of exploring and identifying values, then relating those specific individualized values to types of jobs, and then exploring jobs that are good matches with the individual's particular set of values. Counseling sessions could be scheduled to accomplish this as follows:

1. Session 1

During the first counseling session, ask the consumer what was liked and/or disliked in their experiences in the following areas:

- a. school
- b. work
- c. hobbies or recreation

The intent is to ask clarifying and specifying questions to ascertain the core thing about why a person liked something they said they liked.

- a. What did you like...
- b. What was it exactly about that, that you liked...
- c. How does that differ from...
- d. I think you are saying you value...

It is important to explore the consumer's likes and dislikes in several experiences, not just one or two, because their experiences will have been different. This provides them an opportunity to articulate different likes and dislikes.

As you ask your clarifying and specifying questions, pay attention to what the consumer disliked, as well as what they liked, and pursue those negative avenues of inquiry as well. At the end of the first counseling session, give the consumer an assignment to review the want ads and write down any job that matches their "likes" identified during the counseling session.

You should tell the consumer to pay no attention to whether the job is at all realistic or feasible. Tell them that reality will be dealt with later. Right now, it is time to dream.

2. Session 2

During session two (approximately one week later), the consumer should come with a list of dream jobs - jobs that they either think they would be really interested in or jobs they are curious about. If not, terminate the session and reschedule the appointment so the consumer can complete the assignment.

The Counselor should review the list of jobs, job by job, asking, "What is it about this job that makes you feel as though you would like it?"

As you discuss these jobs, give the individual any information that they are missing about the job, such as the pay, the necessary preparation, etc. This is a good time to have an Occupational Outlook Handbook beside you.

The object of session 2 is to help the individual to begin to be realistic and practical in their choice of an employment goal. End the session by narrowing the list to choices agreed upon between the consumer and the Counselor.

3. Session 3

During session three (approximately one week later) the Counselor begins by explaining the very real facts of life and by looking at the job choices realistically.

Begin the session by discussing four specific and very important reality areas:

- a. Money - This is really two issues. How much do they need to begin with, to go to work and to leave behind whatever they are living on now, such as Social Security Income, Family Independence Temporary Assistance (FITAP), parent's income, Medicaid, food stamps, etc?

The second part of the money issues is, "What would the consumer like to be making five years from now?"

- b. Time - How much time is the consumer willing to spend becoming prepared for a job? Can the consumer spend four or five years going to college? Two years for community college? Three months for on-the-job training? Does the consumer need immediate placement? Discuss this.
- c. Geography - Where is the consumer willing to work? This needs to be specific. If the consumer is willing to relocate, to where and what are the rules? If relocation is not a consideration, how far from home is the consumer willing to go? Does the consumer have access to either public or private transportation?
- d. Functional Capacities/Impediments to Employment - Let the consumer define what limitations exist. Take care not to overly emphasize this. The individual you are working with is probably keenly aware of these factors and really does not need you to reinforce them.

You now have a set of data that constitutes boundaries and sets limits. The next step is to compare the list of possible jobs with the boundaries the two of you have just articulated, to see if there are matches. Most of the time you will find that there are matches. Even if there are not matches, at least now the issues have been clarified and the consumer will be more receptive to looking for a match using vocational evaluation results.

If a match is found, the final assignment is to arrange for the consumer to talk to someone who actually does the job that has been targeted.

The consumer needs to ask exactly what a person in this job really does, as opposed to what most people think this job is about; how does one become prepared for this job; what is the starting pay and the pay range; what are the benefits; what are the drawbacks, etc. Be prepared to discuss what they've learned at the next session.

4. Session 4

During the last session ask the consumer to relate anything learned from this contact. If the contact resulted in questions or misgivings about the job goal, you will need to deal with these. If the first employment goal has to be abandoned, move on to another goal on the list.

At the end of the career counseling process, the Counselor should have a motivated consumer who has clarified and articulated their values with an expanded perception of possibilities.

Also, the consumers will probably feel they have received a very valuable service from a very knowledgeable Counselor, and they have been provided an opportunity for informed choice.

IV. CONSUMER'S RESPONSIBILITIES DURING SERVICE DELIVERY

- A. The Counselor must clearly articulate the Counselor's expectations with regard to the consumer's performance towards successful completion of services that culminate in employment for the consumer. This is accomplished through guidance and counseling with the consumer during the development and implementation of:
1. Trial Work Plan

 2. Individualized Plan for Employment
- B. The Counselor must provide guidance and counseling to the consumer, including an explanation of the following:
1. The Counselor's expectations of the consumer, as outlined on the Plan and agreed to by the consumer. Such requirements must be clearly outlined as a part of the measurable criteria on the Plan.
 2. If the Counselor subsequently determines that the consumer does not have the ability to attain the employment goal selected because the consumer fails to achieve the performance standards outlined on a Plan, the Counselor will provide career counseling to redirect the consumer into a more suitable and appropriate occupation.
 - a. If the consumer elects to continue working towards the employment goal in question, after the Counselor's career counseling to redirect the consumer, the Counselor can discontinue services.

- b. If the consumer subsequently submits additional information and the Counselor determines such information indicates that the consumer has remedied weaknesses that impeded the consumer from progressing towards the employment goal, the Counselor can resume provision of services towards the employment goal previously in question.

408.1 INFORMED CHOICE

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. The purpose of “informed choice” is to ensure full participation for both applicants and eligible individuals throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.
- B. Individuals are provided informed choice:
- During assessments for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs,
 - In the selection of employment outcomes and services needed to achieve these outcomes;
 - In the selection of the entities providing such services; and
 - In the methods used to secure such services.
- C. While LRS supports and encourages consumers to actively participate, make meaningful choices, “informed choice” does not mean absolute choice. Rehabilitation Counselors must review, consider, and approve all Plans. In doing so, Rehabilitation Counselors will apply their professional judgment, applicable law, regulations, and policies; sound planning considerations; and responsible use of public funds.

II. COUNSELOR’S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Informed choice is a decision-making process that occurs throughout the individual’s experience in the vocational rehabilitation program. The Rehabilitation Counselor should ensure that the consumer has sufficient information about the available options so he/she can make meaningful choices resulting in a successful vocational outcome.
- B. Specifically, the Rehabilitation Counselor must:
1. Assist the individual during the assessment process to discover the individual’s strengths, abilities, capabilities, and interests; and if appropriate, to encourage the participation of family members and others in the vocational rehabilitation process. (Reference: Part 404 Applicant Interview; Part 405 Eligibility and Part 409, Comprehensive Assessment.)
 2. Inform the consumer about available options for developing the Plan and for exercising informed choice and to assure that the individual understands the options. (Reference: Part 413 Individualized Plan for Employment.)

3. Inform the individual of services that support the individual in exercising informed choice and help the individual to link with any necessary support services. (Reference: Part 412 Services and appropriate subsection.)
4. Facilitate the development of the individual's ability to gather information and to support the individual in making decisions to the best of the individual's ability. (Reference: Part 408 Vocational Guidance and Counseling for Career Planning.)
5. Work with the individual to build relationships and to align resources that will enable the individual to make an informed choice and to work toward the employment outcome. (Reference: Part 410 Comparable Services and Similar Benefits; Subsection 412.2 Guidance and Counseling during Service Delivery and Part 414 Job Placement.)

III. CONSUMER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Individuals with disabilities have a major role in determining their vocational rehabilitation program. One major goal of the vocational rehabilitation process is to foster the greatest degree of independence and responsibility as possible. Families, representatives and others may also play an important role in the success of the consumer.
- B. The consumer must:
 1. Determine the extent to which family members or other individuals are to be involved in the consumer's program of vocational rehabilitation, particularly the planning process.
 2. Tell the Counselor about the consumer's interests, preferences, strengths, values, resources, experiences, goals, and any weakness or limitations;
 3. Work in partnership with the Rehabilitation Counselor and complete activities, assignments, and appointments that will provide the Counselor and the consumer with information needed to identify the consumer's range of options;
 4. Participate in planning and problem solving by making decisions and taking actions based on the information the consumer and the Counselor have developed;
 5. Make decisions about the options for developing the Plan; the extent of technical assistance needed for exercising the various options and the extent to which family members and others are to be involved in the planning process.

IV. DOCUMENTING INFORMED CHOICE

- A. Documentation in the case record and AWARE to substantiate “informed choice” is important because it highlights actions and demonstrates that decisions were made in accordance with legislation, regulations, and policies.
- B. Because informed choice occurs throughout the rehabilitation process, evidence of informed consumer choice must be documented in the case record and or AWARE during each step of the process. The goal is to demonstrate throughout the case record and or AWARE that the Counselor provided sufficient data for consumers to make an informed decision.
- C. The case record and or AWARE documentation must demonstrate how consumers have been made active participants in their vocational rehabilitation programs, especially in making decisions regarding their employment goal, services needed to reach the goal, service providers and the process used to provide or procure the services.
 - 1. Examples
 - a. An AWARE case notes narrative that describes a counseling session in which an agency-approved list of training programs was discussed with a consumer;
 - b. An AWARE case notes narrative that summarizes a counseling session describing pros and cons of supported employment vs. on-site training and the settings in which the employment would occur.
 - c. An AWARE case notes narrative summarizing a counseling session that ends by stating, “After discussing several training options, the consumer selected XYZ School.”
 - 2. The Counselor should explain the importance of the consumer’s statements on the Plan and encourage the consumer to express his/her perception of “informed choice” to the best of his/her ability on the Plan. The consumer’s statements can be documented in AWARE on the Plan page or in Case Notes.