Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Eligibility and Disability Priority
Policy Document

Policy Name: Eligibility and Disability Priority		
Effective Date: 11/01/2026	Revision Date:	Retirement Date:
Review Schedule: Annual	Revision Number:	

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) provides vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to individuals with disabilities who meet the eligibility requirements established by federal regulation. Eligibility determinations will be made promptly, based on available data, and in collaboration with the applicant. All eligibility and disability priority determinations shall be made by a Qualified Rehabilitation Professional (QRP) and supported by sufficient documentation in the case record to substantiate the determination and demonstrate how the determination was reached.

IDVR presumes that any applicant who meets the eligibility criteria can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of VR services.

2.0 LEGAL AUTHORITY

34 CFR § 361.41
34 CFR § 361.42
34 CFR § 361.43
34 CFR § 361.5(c)(27-30)
RSA Technical Assistance Circular 24-01

3.0 SCOPE/APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to VR applicants, IDVR staff responsible for processing applications, determining eligibility, assigning disability priority categories, completing ineligibility determinations, and processing closures as necessary.

4.0 STANDARD

4.1 Eligibility Criteria: An applicant is eligible for IDVR services if a QRP determines the following criteria are met:

4.1.1 The applicant has a physical or mental impairment(s);

4.1.2 The applicant's physical or mental impairment(s) constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and

4.1.3 The applicant requires VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment consistent with the applicant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

4.2 Eligibility Determinations

4.2.1 Eligibility determinations will be made as promptly as possible and no later than 60 days from the date of application, unless an extension based on unforeseen circumstances outside the control of the VR agency is agreed upon by the applicant.

4.2.1.1 Eligibility decisions must include a review of existing data, including:

4.2.1.2 Observations made by IDVR employees during the application and/or eligibility process and documented in the service record;

4.2.1.3 Education records;

4.2.1.4 Information provided by the applicant or family, including information used by schools or other agencies, that is documented in the service record;

4.2.1.5 Determinations made by officials of other agencies (e.g., SSA award letter)

4.2.1.6 Medical records describing the nature and extent of the disability.

4.3 Additional Assessments: If existing data is insufficient to determine eligibility or current functioning, IDVR may obtain additional information through:

4.3.1 Trial work experiences (TWEs);

4.3.2 Assistive technology evaluations;

4.3.3 Personal assistance services;

4.3.4 Medical or psychological assessments;

4.3.5 Any other support services that are necessary to determine whether an individual is eligible.

4.4 Assessment Conditions: All assessments will be:

4.4.1 Conducted in the most integrated setting appropriate to the applicant's needs;

4.4.2 Consistent with the applicant's informed choice;

4.5 Trial Work Experiences: A TWE shall be utilized when a QRP questions an applicant's ability to benefit from VR services due to the severity of disability or disabilities. TWE's are not routine and are only used when required.

4.5.1 TWE must be of sufficient variety and conducted over a sufficient period to determine whether the applicant can benefit from VR services in terms of a competitive integrated employment (CIE) outcome;

4.5.2 IDVR must provide appropriate supports, including, but not limited to, assistive technology devices and services and personal assistance services, to

accommodate the rehabilitation needs of the individual during the Trial Work Experiences.

4.6 Presumptive Eligibility for Social Security Beneficiaries

4.6.1 An applicant who receives Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) based on the applicant's disability is presumed to be eligible for VR services and presumed to be an individual with a significant disability, unless there is a question regarding the applicant's ability to benefit from services; and

4.6.2 Such individuals are considered to have a significant physical or mental disability as defined in 34 CFR § 361.5(c)(30).

4.7 Factors prohibited in eligibility determination:

4.7.1 Non-disability factors such as age, sex, race, color, national origin, type of expected employment outcome, referral source, anticipated cost of services, income level, geographic location, access to public transportation, legal history, lack of relevant work experience, education status, or lack of training are not considered for an eligibility determination.

4.8 Significance of Disability is determined by a QRP as a part of the eligibility determination process.

4.8.1 Significance of disability will be indicated by assignment of disability priority category.

4.9 Priority Categories: Under Order of Selection (OOS), individuals determined eligible for IDVR services are assigned a disability priority category based on objective evidence of functional limitations, which determines priority for services when resources are limited.

4.9.1 Priority 1: Most Significant Disability (MSD) describes an individual who:

4.9.1.1 Has a severe physical and/or mental impairment that seriously limits three (3) or more functional categories (including mobility, work skills, self-care, interpersonal skills, communication, self-direction, or work tolerance); and

4.9.1.2 Requires multiple Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) services over an extended period.

4.9.2 Priority 2: Significant Disability (SD) describes an individual who:

4.9.2.1 Has a severe physical and/or mental impairment that seriously limits one (1) or more functional categories; and

4.9.2.2 Requires multiple IPE services over an extended period.

4.9.3 Priority 3: Disability (D) describes an individual who has a physical or mental impairment; and

4.9.3.1 The impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and

4.9.3.2 Can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from VR services.

4.10 Ineligibility Determinations: An applicant who does not meet eligibility criteria will be determined ineligible for services and their VR case will be closed.

4.10.1 Applicants will be provided written notification of case closure along with information regarding their right to appeal.

4.10.2 Individuals determined ineligible may reapply for VR services and receive a new determination of eligibility if circumstances change.

5.0 EXCEPTIONS: An extension to the 60-day eligibility determination timeframe may be granted under the following conditions:

5.1 A one-time 30-day extension due to exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of IDVR or the need for trial work experiences may be granted with agreement between the applicant and QRP and a specified timeframe to complete the eligibility determination. Supervisor approval is required for the initial extension. Additional eligibility extensions require District Manager approval.

5.2 Eligibility determination extensions will not be granted due to the applicant's lack of engagement and/or failure to meet reasonable requirements established by IDVR during the eligibility determination process.

5.3 Eligibility determination extensions shall include required applicant and IDVR actions and specific timeframes to complete the eligibility determination. The extension must be recorded in the Aware case management system.

5.4 If an applicant cannot meet reasonable requirements necessary to complete the eligibility determination within the agreed upon timeframes, case closure will follow in accordance with policy.