

**WAC 67-25-061 Vocational rehabilitation—Informed choice.** Applicants and recipients of services (or, as appropriate, their representatives) are provided information and support services to assist the individual in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process consistent with the following provisions:

(1) Inform each applicant and recipient of services (including students and youth with disabilities), through appropriate modes of communication, about the availability of and opportunities to exercise informed choice, including the availability of support services for individuals with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice throughout the vocational rehabilitation process;

(2) Assist applicants and recipients of services in exercising informed choice in decisions related to the provision of assessment services;

(3) Develop and implement flexible procurement policies and methods that facilitate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and that afford recipients of services meaningful choices among the methods used to procure vocational rehabilitation services;

(4) Assist eligible individuals (or, as appropriate, the individuals' representatives) in acquiring information that enables them to exercise informed choice in the development of their individualized plans for employment with respect to the selection of the:

(a) Employment outcome;

(b) Specific vocational rehabilitation services needed to achieve the employment outcome;

(c) Entity that will provide the services;

(d) Employment setting and the settings in which the services will be provided;

(e) Methods available for procuring the services; and

(f) Ensure that the availability and scope of informed choice is consistent with the obligations of the department under this section.

(5) The department must provide the individual or the individual's representative, or assist the individual or the individual's representative in acquiring, information necessary to make an informed choice about the specific vocational rehabilitation services, including the providers of those services, that are needed to achieve the individual's employment outcome. This information must include, at a minimum, information relating to the:

(a) Cost, accessibility, and duration of potential services;

(b) Participant satisfaction with those services to the extent that information relating to participant satisfaction is available;

(c) Qualifications of potential service providers;

(d) Types of services offered by the potential providers; and

(e) Outcomes achieved by individuals working with service providers, to the extent that such information is available.

(6) In providing or assisting the individual or the individual's representative in acquiring the information required, the department may use, but is not limited to, the following methods or sources of information:

(a) Lists of services and service providers;

(b) Periodic participant satisfaction surveys and reports;

(c) Referrals to other consumers, consumer groups, or disability advisory councils qualified to discuss the services or service providers;

(d) Relevant accreditation, certification, or other information relating to the qualifications of service providers;

(e) Opportunities for individuals to visit or experience various work and service provider settings.

(7) The department must provide information to an eligible individual or participant who is interested in becoming employed, but is uncertain of the impact work income may have on any disability benefits and entitlements being received, and/or is not aware of benefits, such as access to health care, that might be available to support employment efforts.

(a) This typically involves an analysis of an individual's current benefits, such as SSDI and SSI, the individual's financial situation, and the effect different income levels from work will have on the individual's future financial situation. This assistance is intended to provide the individual an opportunity to make an informed choice regarding the pursuit of employment;

(b) Ongoing assistance may also be provided as the individual decides on employment goals, searches for jobs, and becomes employed.

[Statutory Authority: P.L. 113-128 and 34 C.F.R. Part 361. WSR 18-14-101, § 67-25-061, filed 7/3/18, effective 8/3/18.]