OVR and other state agencies can be accessed through a new 1 stop shop for the PA government on the internet

http://www.cwds.state.pa.us

What is OVR?

OVR is the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, a State Agency that helps persons with disabilities help themselves to prepare for, start, and maintain a career. OVR has fifteen offices located around the State with over 400 professional vocational rehabilitation counselors. These counselors work every year with thousands of persons who have physical, mental, and emotional disabilities.

Should I Apply To OVR?

You should apply if:

• You have a disability,
• Your disability causes you substantial problems in preparing for, getting, or maintaining a career, and
• You want to work.

How Do I Get Started?

Call the district office responsible for the county in which you live. This information, along with that office's phone number, is listed below. Explain to an OVR staff person that you have a disability and want help with employment. They will make arrangements to meet with you.

Can OVR Help People Who Are Deaf?

Yes. Each district office has at least one rehabilitation counselor for the deaf who can communicate with you in sign language and with a Text Telephone (TTY).

Will I Be Eligible?

When you apply to OVR for help with employment, a vocational rehabilitation counselor will be assigned to work with you. The counselor will meet with you face-to-face to get to know you in order to decide how OVR can best help you to help yourself. With your written consent, your counselor will gather information about your needs, your interests, aptitudes, education, work experience, family, and finances. Your counselor will arrange, at no cost to you, needed medical examinations and testing. These may be necessary to get the clearest picture of you as a person who wants to work. These examinations might show that OVR is not the best agency to give the help you need. If that is the case, your counselor will refer you to a different agency that can be of more help to you. You will be eligible for OVR services if:
• You have a disability, that is, a physical, mental, or emotional impairment which results in a substantial impediment to employment, and you can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from services provided, and

• Vocational rehabilitation services are required for you to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

**How Long Will It Take To Determine If I Am Eligible?**

You will know if you are eligible to OVR services within 60 days of the date you apply for OVR services, unless:

• Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond our control preclude us from completing the determination AND you agree an extension is warranted, or
• An Extended Evaluation is required to determine your eligibility.

**What Happens After I Become Eligible For OVR?**

You and your counselor will work together as you make informed choices regarding a cooperative plan of action to include a career goal, the services needed to help you help yourself to get started in or maintain your career, and your responsibilities. This plan of action is called the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP).

Deciding on your goal usually takes time. During this time you will receive information and options to assist you in developing a successful program. You will have the opportunity to consider different types of careers, your transferable skills, chances for employment in your local area, potential earnings, family responsibilities, training, and other matters of importance to you and your family.

Your vocational rehabilitation counselor wants you to pick the right career, one that you will still want and at which you will be able to work years from now. Your IWRP outlines the steps you will take to get a job and can be changed if your needs change. you and your counselor will work together to make any necessary changes.

**What Services Are Available To Me?**

Some services can help you overcome or lessen your disability; others can directly help you prepare for a career. The services you receive will be arranged to meet your individual needs. Not everyone will need every service. OVR services include:

• Diagnostic Services - medical, psychological, and audiological exams and test used to better understand your disability and your needs for specific types of services.
• Vocational Evaluation - aptitude, interest, general ability, academic exams, work tolerance, and "hands-on" job experience used to understand your vocational potential.
• Counseling - helping you to find the ways to better help yourself throughout the rehabilitation program from the first meeting with your counselor to your starting and maintaining a career. Counseling helps you to better understand your potential, rely on your abilities, set realistic vocational goals, change them when necessary, develop successful work habits, and begin a satisfying career.
• Restoration Services - many type of medical services and equipment such as physical and occupational therapy, wheelchairs, automobile hand controls, and other type of rehabilitation technology provided to enable you to pursue your career and achieve independence.
• Training - education to prepare you for a job including but not limited to basic academic, vocation/technical, college, on-the-job, independent living skills, and personal and work adjustment training. It may be necessary for your to leave home to get the training you want and need.
• Placement - counseling, job-seeking programs, job club, and job development used to increase your ability to get a job. You will receive ideas, practice, and advice on finding job leads, filling out applications, getting interviews for a job, and on how to interview. Your counselor may also give you job leads or explain to employers about tax credits for hiring you. The more contacts with employers you make, the better your chances are starting your career.

Support services are provided if they are necessary for you to start your career. Such services may include:

• Room, board, and transportation costs during your evaluation or while you are completing a rehabilitation program
• Occupational tools, licenses, or equipment
• Home modifications, adaptive or special household equipment in order to help you get ready to go to and be on time for your job
• Van or car modifications including special driving devices or lifting devices to enable you to travel to your job
• Personal care assistance provided to help you with your daily needs in order to enable you to participate in a vocational rehabilitation program
• Job site modifications that will enable you to get and keep a job
• Independent living training to provide the means for you to become more self-sufficient and thereby make it possible for you to participate fully in the vocational rehabilitation program
• Text Telephone (TTY), signaling devices, hearing aids, and interpreter services may be provided to help you communicate if needed to participate in the vocational rehabilitation program.

How Much Will This Cost Me?
It does not cost you anything to apply for services. There is no charge for diagnostic services, vocational evaluation, counseling, or job placement assistance. If you are eligible for services, your counselor may ask you to provide documents about your income and expenses. Depending upon your income, you may have to contribute to the cost of OVR services. OVR cannot pay for any services your receive before you apply to OVR. Even after you apply, OVR can pay only for those services approved in advance by your counselor.

How Long Will It Take Me To Start My Career?
That depends on your abilities, the career for which you are preparing, and on your individual needs; most important, it depends on how much responsibility you take for helping yourself to prepare for, start, or maintain a career. You can help things move along as quickly as possible if you:

• Help your counselor get the needed information
• Keep all appointments or call if you can't be there
• Stay in touch with your counselor (if your counselor cannot find you, things are bound to slow down)
• Tell your counselor if you feel things are going too slowly.
What If I Have Questions Or Complaints?

This is your rehabilitation program. Don't hesitate to ask questions about anything. You are entitled to the best service that OVR can give you. Your comments, suggestions and criticisms are important.

If you are an applicant or a client of OVR and are dissatisfied with a determination or service OVR is providing, you may request a hearing before an impartial hearing officer. A written request for a hearing must be made within thirty (30) days. This request must be mailed to or filed with the Director, Bureau of Program Operations, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Room 1310, Labor & Industry Building, Seventh and Forster Streets, Harrisburg, PA 17120. An impartial hearing officer will be assigned to hear and decide your case. You will be given the opportunity for an informal administrative review prior to the impartial hearing. At any time during your program you may contact the Client Assistance Program for help.

What Is The Client Assistance Program?

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) works with you and your counselor to:

- Act as an advocate for your rights
- Answer your questions about rehabilitation
- Explain rules, regulations, and procedures
- Assist you through the appeal process
- Help you to establish and maintain open communication.

Any applicant for OVR services who wants general information or who would like CAP's involvement during the rehabilitation program can contact CAP for assistance. If your case is about to be or already has been closed by OVR, you may ask CAP to review the case to ensure that you have received maximum benefits from OVR. To contact CAP:

**Philadelphia Office**
1617 JFK Boulevard, Suite. 800
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Voice/TDD: (215) 557-7112
Fax: (215) 557-7602
Toll Free: (888) 745-2357

**Harrisburg Office**
2 North Second Street, Suite 100
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Voice/TDD: (717) 364-1733
Fax: (717) 236-8800

Email Address: info@equalemployment.org

What Are Important Things To Remember If I Am Dissatisfied?

- Try to solve the problem with your counselor first.
• Your counselor will help you with an appeal if you ask for help.
• You will not be penalized for making an appeal.
• You may bring someone with you to help you at the appeal.

When Do I Leave OVR?

A perfect ending is when you have started your career. Even though you are working and your case is closed, it is possible that help can be provided if you begin to have problems with working or with your disability. If this happens, contact the district office responsible for the county in which you live (see the table above). You may choose to end your involvement with OVR at any time, but you should let your counselor know if you make such a decision.

If you do not follow through with the steps you helped to plan, are uncooperative, cannot be located, or if OVR cannot help you to reach a vocational goal, your counselor may find it necessary to close your case.

Can I Start Over Again?

Yes. You may reapply at any time.

What Are My Rights?

• You may not be discriminated against by reason of political or religious opinions or affiliations, race, age, sex, national origin, or disability.
• Your are entitled to a thorough evaluation to find out if you are eligible for rehabilitation.
• All information that is given to your rehabilitation counselor or obtained about you will be used only for your rehabilitation.
• You have a right to ask to change counselors.
• You have a right to continuing service if you should move to an area serviced by a different district office within the State. Discuss your move with your counselor.

How Will I Be Treated?

You will be treated in a manner consistent with the principles of:

• Individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of a meaningful career based in informed choices that you make;
• Respect for your privacy, rights, and equal access as an individual;
• Inclusion, integration, and full participation as an individual;
• Support for the involvement of a parent, family member, guardian, advocate, or authorized representative if you request, desire, or need such assistance;
• Support for individual advocacy and community involvement.

What Are My Responsibilities?

You are in charge of your rehabilitation program. You must help yourself and not think that your counselor will handle everything. You must participate actively in setting your goals and work hard to achieve them. It is very important that you talk to your counselor about your needs, your deadlines, and anything else that could speed up, slow down, or stop you from starting and maintaining a career. Rehabilitation will work better if you:
• Keep all appointments, or call if you can't be there
• Ask questions if you do not understand something
• Are honest about your needs and feelings
• Help yourself

**What Are My Counselor's Responsibilities?**

Your counselor understands how disabilities can get in the way of a career. It is your counselor's responsibility to help you understand your strengths and the steps needed to overcome your substantial impediment to employment. Your counselor is to help you decide on a career that builds on your strengths; give you information, guidance, and support; and arrange for you to receive the services you need to prepare for, start, and maintain a career. We hope that the information will help you understand OVR and that marks the beginning of a successful partnership. If you have any further questions, please ask your counselor.

**Please Take Notice**

When OVR does not have enough money to provide services to all eligible individuals, it is required to provide services according to an Order of Selection. Under an Order of Selection, a certain group (or groups) of individuals receive services while others are placed on a indefinite waiting list should sufficient funds become available. OVR's Order of Selection places all eligible individuals into one of three groups as follows:

- Individuals with the Most Severe Disabilities
- Individuals with Severe Disabilities
- All remaining eligible individuals.

Should you be eligible for OVR services, your counselor will inform you if OVR is on an Order of Selection, and whether you will be provided services or placed on a waiting list.

**OVR'S Non-Discrimination Policy**

An applicant or client of OVR may not be discriminated against by reason of religious creed, age, race, sex, color, national origin, ancestry, or disability. Any applicant or client of OVR who believes he or she is being discriminated against may contact the OVR Compliance Officer at the following address:

PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
1521 North Sixth Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102
(800) 442-6352 - Voice or 1-800-233-3008 - TTY
# OVR District Office Locations

*The District Office and Counties Served is taken from the OVR website.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Office</th>
<th>Counties Served</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALLENTOWN</strong></td>
<td>Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton</td>
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<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>45 N. Fourth Street</td>
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<td>Allentown, PA 18102</td>
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<tr>
<td>610-821-6441 Voice</td>
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<td>800-922-9536 Voice*</td>
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<tr>
<td>610-821-6144 TTY</td>
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<tr>
<td>888-377-9207 TTY*</td>
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<td><strong>ALTOONA</strong></td>
<td>Bedford, Blair, Centre, Fulton, Huntingdon</td>
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<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Services</td>
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<td>1130 12th Ave., Suite 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altoona, PA 16601</td>
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<tr>
<td>814-946-7240 Voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>814-949-7914 TTY</td>
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<tr>
<td>800-442-6343 Voice*</td>
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<tr>
<td>866-320-7955 TTY*</td>
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<td><strong>ALTOONA</strong></td>
<td>Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Somerset, Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blindness &amp; Visual Services</td>
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<td>1130 12th Ave., Suite 300</td>
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<td>Altoona, PA 16601</td>
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<td>814-946-7330 Voice</td>
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<td>866-695-7673 Voice*</td>
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<td><strong>DUBOIS</strong></td>
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<td>199 Beaver Drive</td>
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<td>Dubois, PA 15801</td>
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<td>814-371-7340 Voice</td>
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<td>814-371-7505 TTY</td>
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<tr>
<td>800-922-4017 Voice/TTY*</td>
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<td><strong>ERIE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3200 Lovell Place</td>
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<td>New Castle</td>
<td>100 Margaret Street, New Castle, PA 16101</td>
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<td>Norristown</td>
<td>1875 New Hope Street, Norristown, PA 19401-3146</td>
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<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>444 N. 3rd Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19123</td>
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| **READING**                   | **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**
3602 Kutztown Road, Suite 200
Reading, PA 19605
610-621-5800 Voice
800-442-0949 Voice*
610-621-5806 TTY
877-475-7326 TTY*                | Berks, Schuylkill         |
| **WASHINGTON**                | **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**
201 W. Wheeling Street
Washington, PA 15301
724-223-4430 Voice
800-442-6367 Voice*
274-223-4443 TTY
866-752-6163 TTY*                | Fayette, Greene, Washington |
| **WILKES-BARRE**              | **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**
300 G Laird Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702
570-826-2011 Voice
800-634-2060 Voice*
570-826-2023 TTY
888-651-6117 TTY*                | Bradford, Columbia, Lackawanna,
Luzerne, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna,
Wayne, Wyoming |
|                               | **Blindness & Visual Services**
300 G Laird Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702
570-826-2361 Voice
866-277-4163 Voice*
570-826-2023 TTY
800-651-6117 TTY*                | Berks, Bradford, Carbon,
Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne,
Monroe, Northampton, Pike,
Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna,
Tioga, Wayne, Wyoming |
| **WILLIAMSPORT**             | **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**
The Grit Building, Suite 102
208 W. 3rd Street
Williamsport, PA 17701            | Clinton, Lycoming, Montour,
Northumberland, Potter, Snyder,
Tioga, Union |
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<tr>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
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| 570-327-3600 Voice  
800-442-6359 Voice*  
570-327-3620 TTY  
800-706-0884 TTY* | YORK  
Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
2550 Kingston Road, Suite 100  
York, PA 17402  
717-771-4407 Voice  
800-762-6306 Voice*  
717-771-4433 TTY  
866-466-1404 TTY* | Adams, Franklin, Lancaster, York |
| 717-787-5244 Voice  
800-442-6351 Voice*  
717-787-4885 TTY  
866-830-7327 TTY* | HIRAM G. ANDREWS CENTER  
727 Goucher Street  
Johnstown, PA 15905  
814-255-8200 Voice  
814-255-5873 TTY  
800-762-4211 Voice/TTY* | |
| 717-787-6176 Voice  
800-622-2842 Voice* | OVR CENTRAL OFFICE  
1521 N. 6th Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17102  
Blindness & Visual Services  
1521 N. 6th Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17102  
717-787-6176 Voice  
800-622-2842 Voice* | |