

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation

Purpose

The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (AIVR) Program is designed to assist eligible Native Americans with disabilities in becoming employed. In Oklahoma, the program provides culturally appropriate services to individuals through a cooperative agreement between the state of Oklahoma and federal and tribal service providers. Each Oklahoma tribal Vocational Rehabilitation program has a working partnership with DRS. VR clients have the option to work with both programs during the rehabilitation progress. Services provided by AIVR may include vocational, medical and psychological evaluations, vocational counseling and guidance, physical and mental restoration, training, rehabilitation equipment and devices and job placement.

Contact(s)

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Financial Criteria

- none

Eligibility

To be eligible for AIVR services an individual:

- must be a member of a federally recognized tribe;
- must live within the tribal VR service area;
- has a physical or mental impairment, which are barriers to employment;
- can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services to obtain an employment outcome;
- requires VR services to obtain, keep or return to work.

AT Services Provided/Covered

- Assessments & Evaluations
- Information & Referral
- Case Management
- Locating Alternate Funding
- Training for Consumer & Family
- Maintenance & Repairs

AT Devices Provided/Covered

- Aids for Daily Living
- Speech Communication
- Aids for Hearing Impaired
- Environmental Adaptations
- Aids for Vision Impaired
- Mobility/Seating & Positioning
- Computers & Related
- Vehicle Modifications

Application Process

- Contact the AIVR office that serves the area in which you reside to apply for services. Referrals are considered applicants as soon as the counselor has a document signed by the individual requesting AIVR services. This may be a formal application or a letter signed by the applicant, applicant's parent, guardian, or other representative, which provides the minimum basic information and requests AIVR services.
- In application status, the counselor will secure sufficient information to make a determination of eligibility or ineligibility for AIVR services, determine a priority group assignment, or make a decision to put the client into extended evaluation. The information needed by the counselor may include the results of a physical examination, an assistive technology evaluation, or an extended evaluation of vocational potential for gainful employment.
- If a person is determined to be eligible for services based on evaluation information, the counselor and the individual will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that is designed to result in eventual competitive employment for the individual.

Dispute Resolution Process

- Each AIVR Project has a formal appeals process that clients are advised about upon application for services. The appeals process may vary by Project.

Assistance Provided For Appeals

- The Client Assistance Program (CAP) assists disabled persons who are seeking or receiving services from any program funded by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. CAP can: a) advise clients of their rights and responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act; b) assist clients in communicating their concerns to AIVR Projects; and c) represent the individual in the fair hearing process when appropriate and/or needed.
- Additional information concerning vocational rehabilitation and the appeals process can be obtained from the CAP at (405) 521-3756 or (800) 522-8224 statewide.

Pieces of the Puzzle

- The IPE is an individualized program of services based around a core of comprehensive evaluation, vocational counseling, and job placement that are needed to assist the person in attaining his or her employment goal. Any assistive technology that the person needs for employment must be included in this plan. However, AT devices and services may be essential to help the person demonstrate vocational capabilities.
- Persons may be required to participate in the cost of some services, including AT, depending on their income level.
- Once a decision has been made to supply an eligible client with assistive technology, it may be possible to provide a wide range of devices if they are vocationally relevant. However, AIVR cannot buy devices that other sources can buy or that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require other sources to provide.
- The primary purpose of assistive technology devices and services provided by the AIVR program is to enable a person to obtain and maintain gainful employment.