Vocational Rehabilitation: Two Supports, One Goal

What Tribal VR Can Do

- Supports Tribal members with disabilities prepare for & find work
- Serves enrolled Tribal members, provided within the community
- Includes traditions, language & community values in employment planning
- Guided by Tribal sovereignty (run by the tribe, not the state)
- Led by Tribal leadership making sure supports reflect the community's values & needs

TVR & VR Can:

Help people get & keep jobs

Work together with co - enrollment

Share Discovery to learn about strengths & interest

Write Coordinated plans so goals & timelines match

Combine employer connections to open more job options

Coordinate job coaching & ongoing supports

Include families & community in planning

What State VR Can Do

- Supports any Arizonan with a disability to get and keep a job
- Serves job seekers statewide, both on and off Tribal communities
- Connections to schools, job training & employers across Arizona
- Offers PreETS (work preparation) for students under the age of 22
- Connects with other state supports like disability & health services

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Funding provided by the Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation program as part of the Customized Employment Pilot project, which is aimed at developing partnerships, creating capacity, and enhancing employment outcomes for Arizonans with the most significant disabilities.

What Tribal Families Need to Know About Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Employment First means everyone can work with the right supports. For Tribal families, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)services are one of the main supports. Both State VR & Tribal VR have a role & using both together can create the strongest path to a good job.

What VR Can Do for You

- Help identify strengths, interests, & work goals
- Provide training, tools, or supports to prepare for work
- Offer job coaching once you're hired
- Support youth in the transition from school to work
- Connect you to employers, training, & resources in your community

Why It's Worth it

- Families experience a clearer path with less confusion
- Plans reflect both cultural values & statewide opportunities
- Supports are stronger & more coordinated
- Job seekers are less likely to fall through the cracks
- The result is not just getting a job, but keeping one that fits & lasts

What Can You Do

- Ask about both State VR & Tribal VR. You may be able to use both
- Bring your family or a trusted person to planning meetings
- Share your story once, then sign a release so services can talk with each other
- Speak up about what supports feel right for you.

Your voice matters most!

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What Vocational Rehabilitation Need to Know About Tribal Job Seekers & Families

Some Tribal job seekers and families want to work but may feel unsure about state systems or how to start. Understanding their experiences and building trust through clear, respectful communication helps create stronger partnerships and lasting employment.

Understanding Why Tribal Job Seekers and Families May Hesitate

Mistrust

Families and job seekers may feel uncertain about state systems because of past experiences with government agencies or a history of broken promises. Building trust takes time, consistency, and follow-through.

Miscommunication

Information doesn't always flow clearly between systems or to families. Many Tribal job seekers receive services from multiple programs (Tribal VR, State VR, DDD, AHCCCS). When updates aren't shared, families feel left out and confused.

Uncertainty

Families may not know where to begin, who is eligible, or whether they can access both Tribal and State VR services at the same time. When no one explains the process, families can feel lost or afraid of doing something wrong. Taking time to explain options builds trust.

Access Looks Different in Every Community

Technology, transportation, and services may look different across Tribal lands and rural areas. Internet or phone access can be limited, and some services that are easy to reach in cities may not be available locally. Meeting families where they are and adjusting how you communicate and plan, helps build trust and makes services work better for everyone.

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How Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors Can Support Tribal Job Seekers

Start with trust
Take time to build relationships before diving into paperwork. Listen first, follow through on what you promise, and be consistent.

Listen First, & Follow Through

Acknowledge Tribal sovereignty
Work with Tribal VR programs, not around them. Ask how they prefer to coordinate and honor existing relationships within the community.

Communicate Based on Their Preferences

Communicate clearly and often
Use plain language and check for understanding. Share information with families and partners so everyone knows what's happening next.

Coordinate services, don't duplicate
With permission, align plans and funding with Tribal VR and other supports so the job seeker gets one clear path.

Center culture and family
Recognize that family, community, and tradition often guide decision-making. Include them in planning whenever possible.

Tradition & Values Guide

Be flexible and patient
Progress may move at a different pace. Respect cultural timelines and community priorities.

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