

Informed choice

Rehabilitation Services (RS) policy

Informed choice is a decision-making process in which the individual analyzes relevant information and selects, with the assistance of the counselor, vocational goals, intermediate objectives, services and service providers. The concept of informed choice flows through every aspect of the rehabilitation process.

RS will provide each applicant, including persons who are participating in an extended evaluation, and each eligible vocational rehabilitation (VR) client with opportunities to make informed choices throughout the rehabilitation process. Each applicant and eligible client work as active partners with counselors to select vocational goals, select Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) intermediate objectives, identify services needed, select providers and choose the methods to secure needed services.

Decisions throughout the rehabilitation process must be consistent with the client's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Staff and clients incorporate the concept of partnership in every step of the rehabilitation process. Both staff and clients bring strengths to this process.

1. For example, staff bring skills in rehabilitation, knowledge about work, careers, technology, RS practices and federal regulations. Facilitating informed choice often requires innovative approaches within the rehabilitation process.
2. The client brings to this partnership a lifetime of experiences, goals and self awareness about the impact of disabilities, abilities, strengths and interests.
3. Families and others often also contribute to this partnership.

Each client or client's representative will receive information about informed choice as well as their responsibilities and opportunities to participate in decision-making. This information is provided by counselors and through the Handbook of Services. Information is provided through appropriate modes of communication based on the client's needs. Assistance is available for persons with cognitive or other disabilities as needed.

During eligibility, each applicant is asked to identify his/her current medical provider for available information. If additional diagnostic information is needed, each applicant may select which provider is used; in some areas there may be a limited number of providers available, or a limited number of providers who will accept RS fees.

RS will assist the client in accessing the information he or she needs to make an informed choice about services and providers of services. Choice in every aspect of service delivery is not open-ended; rather it is related to what is required, not simply desired, to reach the vocational goal and achieve employment. This information will include data related to cost, accessibility and the duration of services. Qualification of provider personnel, scope of available services and the degree to which services are provided in integrated settings are also important components of informed choice.

Sources of such information will include lists of service providers; consumer satisfaction reports; referrals to consumers or groups qualified to discuss options with the individuals; and relevant information related to qualification of providers, such as accreditation or certification credentials. Resource directories developed by local transition councils may also be reviewed, if available.