

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**

**FACT SHEET:
OBTAINING VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is a state and federal program whose primary goal is to provide vocational rehabilitation (VR) and employment services to people with disabilities of all ethnicities and backgrounds. DRS is a division of the Department of Human Services (DHS) in the State of Illinois.

DRS is committed to supporting people with disabilities to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment in their communities. Because people with disabilities—particularly minorities, immigrants, and refugees with disabilities—underutilize the services DRS offers, the VR system in Illinois is reaching out to these diverse communities.

With the right kinds of supports and training, people with disabilities in Illinois can have rewarding careers and job opportunities. Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about available services. Read these to find out whether you or someone you know qualifies.

? FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ?

1. **WHAT IS A “PERSON WITH A DISABILITY”?** A person with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental limitation that makes it difficult for that individual to work. For example, a person may have a disability if he or she:
 - Is deaf or has serious difficulty hearing
 - Is blind or has serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses
 - Has serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
 - Has difficulty dressing or bathing
 - Has difficulty doing everyday tasks alone, such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping
 - Has difficulty moving from place to place or moving their body in certain positions (e.g., walking, climbing, kneeling, sitting, and standing)
 - Has serious difficulty demonstrating appropriate and acceptable behavior in the workplace.

2. **DO I (OR SOMEONE I KNOW) QUALIFY FOR VR SERVICES?** It is the job of the qualified VR staff to determine whether you or someone you know has a disability and is qualified to receive services from DRS to help you get a job or keep a job. The person who is applying should have the proper authorization to work in the United States and its territories.

3. **WHAT SERVICES CAN DRS-VR PROVIDE ME?** DRS provides a variety of services that can be beneficial to your job training, education, and/or employment needs. These supports include: Vocational Counseling and Guidance, Referrals to Appropriate Community Providers, Job Skills Training and Placement, Long-Term Job Supports (for example, access to a personal care attendant or a job coach), Access to Assistive Technology or Related Accommodations, and Access to Transition Services and College Training Options.

4. **HOW DO I APPLY?** You can apply for VR services online, over the phone, by fax, or walk into your local office. You can apply online at drs.illinois.gov/apply. You can also contact the local DRS office nearest to your home at (800) 843-6154 (English or Español) or contact any of the listed multicultural community agencies for language support to help you connect to DRS. For more information about the services DRS provides, please go to drs.illinois.gov
5. **DO I NEED TO PAY FOR VR SERVICES?** Some of the services that DRS provides are based on your income. If some payment is required, your counselor will discuss and explain the cost to you. Many services are free.
6. **WHAT IF I DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH?** If you need language accommodations, please tell your VR counselor so he or she can accommodate your language and cultural needs.

Sounds interesting so far. How do I begin?

When you meet your VR counselor for the first time, please bring as much of the following with you, as possible:



ALL APPLICANTS

- ✓ Medicaid and/or Medicare Card
- ✓ Social Security Award Letter
- ✓ Listing of your past jobs and any degrees or certificates you have earned
- ✓ All available current medical information about your condition; this must be a legible handwritten or typed letter from a physician, licensed therapist, or psychologist stating:
 - Diagnosis/prognosis
 - Symptoms, including any side effects from medications
 - Treatment plan, including a list of medications
 - Approval to work, including any restrictions or accommodations
 - Name, address, and phone number of the physician submitting the letter

Listing of Multicultural Organizations

Organization Name	Contact Person Details	Language Expertise
Arab American Family Services 9044 S Octavia, Bridgeview, IL 60455 Phone: (708) 599-2237 Fax: (708) 599-8299 Website: arabamericanfamilyservices.org	Itedal Shalabi, Executive Director Email: itedals@yahoo.com Phone: (708) 599-2237 Ext. 31	Arabic
Asian Human Services 4753 N. Broadway, Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60640 Phone: (773) 728-2235 Fax: (773) 561-1396 Website: ahschicago.org	Jing Zhang, Director of Community Health Programs Email: jzhang@ahschicago.org Phone: (773) 293-8460	Over 28 languages (e.g., Chinese, Hindi, Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Thai, & Urdu)
Cambodian Association of Illinois 2831 W Lawrence Ave, Chicago, IL 60625 Phone: (773) 878-7090 Fax: (773) 878-5299 Website: cai.maailinois.org	Kathy Reun, Immigration & Family Resources Coordinator Email: kathy@cambodian-association.org Phone: (773) 878-7090 Ext. 205	Khmer
Chinese American Service League (CASL) 2141 S Tan Court, Chicago, IL 60616 Phone: (312) 791-0418 Fax: (312) 791-0509 Website: caslservice.org	Ivy Siu, Family & Community Services Department Manager Email: ivy_siu@caslservice.org Phone: (312) 791-0418 Ext. 2202	Chinese – Cantonese and Mandarin
Chinese Mutual Aid Association 1016 W Argyle St Chicago, IL 60640 Phone: (773) 784-2900 Fax: (773) 784-2984 Website: chinesemutualaid.org	Jamie Taradash, Rehabilitation Services Project Developer Email: jamiet@chinesemutualaid.org Phone: (773) 784-2900 Ext. 110	Over 28 languages (e.g., Bosnian, Burmese, Cantonese/Mandarin, Nepalese, & Vietnamese)
Indo-American Center 6328 N California Ave, Chicago, IL 60659 Phone: (773) 973-4444 Fax: (773) 973-0157 Website: indoamerican.org	Sunitha Doma, Public Benefits Coordinator Email: sdoma@indoamerican.org Phone: (773) 973-4444 Ext. 109	Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, & Urdu
Korean American Community Services 4300 N California, Chicago, IL 60618 Phone: (773) 583-5501 Fax: (773) 583-7009 Website: kacschicago.org	Mi Young Seo, Director of Senior Services & Public Benefits Email: mseo@kacschicago.org Phone: (773) 583-5501 Ext. 160	Korean & Spanish
Lao American Community Services 4750 N Sheridan Rd. Suite 369, Chicago, IL 60640 Phone: (773) 271-0004 Fax: (773) 271-1682 Website: lacschicago.org	Thavone Nyatso, Executive Director Email: info@lacschicago.org Phone: (773) 271-0004	Lao & Thai
Muslim Women Resource Center 6445 N Western Ave, #301, Chicago, IL 60659 Phone: (773) 764-1686 Fax: (773) 764-6753 Website: mwrcnfp.org	Sima Quraishi, Executive Director Email: sima@mwrcnfp.org Phone: (773) 764-1686	Urdu
Nepali American Center 6 E Jerry St., Mount Prospect, IL 60056 Phone: (773) 800-1622 Website: nepaliamericancenter.org	Ankur Sharma, General Secretary Email: info@nepaliamericancenter.org Phone: (773) 800-1622	Nepalese & other tribal languages of Nepal
United African Organization 3424 S State St., Suite 3C8-2, Chicago, IL 60616 Phone: (312) 949-9980 Fax: (312) 949-9981 Website: uniteafricans.org	Nancy Asirifi-Otchere, Program Coordinator Email: Nancy.asirifi-otchere@uniteafricans.org Phone: (312) 949-9980	French, Somali, & all major African languages
Vietnamese Association of Illinois 5110 N Broadway, 2nd Floor, Chicago, IL 60640 Phone: (773) 728-3700 Fax: (773) 728-0497 Website: hnvi.org	Van Duong, Healthcare & Community Program Manager Email: vlduong@yahoo.com Phone: (773) 728-3700	Vietnamese