



**Vocational Rehabilitation** | Guide to Working with Your  
Local VR Office or Employment



## ESRD Network 16

### Guide to Working with Your Local VR Office or Employment Network (EN)

#### What is VR?

Having chronic kidney disease has changed your life, but there are things you can do to reduce its impact on your lifestyle and income. Work with your dialysis team to feel well enough to gain employment. You should be able to do most of the job tasks you did before you started dialysis. If an employer requires hard labor, you may even be able to do that job with an assist device or labor-saving equipment. VR can:

- Evaluate your strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and career interests
- Help you get education or training you need to get a good job
- Help you get the special equipment you need to do that job
- Provide changes to your home so you can work
- Help you keep a job after you get one

#### Am I eligible for services from VR or EN?

Social Security's Listing of Impairments says dialysis and a new transplant may limit workability. If you want a job and get disability checks from Social Security, the TTW program can help you get services through your state VR or a private EN.

#### What steps should I take next?

- Ask your dialysis social worker today about VR and how your treatment plan and dialysis type and schedule can fit your work goals.
- Review these resources for work:
  - [Working While Disabled: How We Can Help](#)
  - [Working with Chronic Kidney Disease](#)
  - [The Work Site](#)
  - [Employment: A Kidney Patient's Guide to Working and Paying for Treatment](#)
  - [Choosing an Employment Network for You](#)
  - [Finding an EN and Assigning Your Ticket Worksheet](#)
- Contact VR or an EN in your area and ask how to apply. You do not need a referral – you can contact them directly.

#### To find your local VR office or EN click on the link below or call:

- [Alaska](#) – 800-478-2815
- [Idaho](#) – 208-334-3390
- [Montana](#) – 877-296-1197
- [Oregon](#) – 877-277-0513
- [Washington](#) – 800-637-5627
- [EN](#) guided or direct search or helpline 866-968-7842



### What can I expect at a VR office?

- Some have group orientations to describe services and provide a handbook.
- If you're interested, the next step is to fill out an application.
- VR will contact you and assign a counselor.
- When you meet with the counselor, be prepared to educate him/her about your kidney disease and treatment, how it limits you from finding employment, what help you need from VR, and may need in a job to fit with your health and treatment. Having a plan for the work you prefer can make VR want to work with you.
- Keep in regular contact with your counselor and be persistent.
- The counselor will decide if you are eligible based on such factors as:
  - If you receive Social Security disability benefits
  - How motivated you are to work
  - Your medical records and doctor's release to work (make sure your doctor knows you want to work and limits you have, if any)
- If state VR has limited funds, it must serve those with the most severe disabilities first under "order of selection" and may provide services and equipment to help those at risk of job loss keep their jobs. Others may have to wait for services. If the wait is long, you can ask VR to refer you to someone else to help you work.
- When active, you and your counselor will write an individualized plan for employment that states what you need to prepare, find and get a job, and keep it.
- Tell your dialysis team how your work with VR or the EN is going. Ask for their help if you need it to keep getting services to reach your work goals.
- When VR closes your case, you may seek help from an EN to keep your job.

### What can an EN do for me?

ENs can provide counseling about benefits and work incentives, career planning, job search and placement, and ongoing employment support. There are different types of ENs and each one can choose what geographic area to cover, which disabilities to serve and what services to provide. If you want to work with an EN, be sure you know all about that program. The [Finding an EN and Assigning Your Ticket Worksheet](#) has topics to ask.



To file a grievance about the care you are receiving at your dialysis facility, contact ESRD Network 16 at 1-800-262-1514