

Self-Employment Considerations

Preliminary Assessment Questions

The preliminary assessment may be the first personal contact the applicant (individual) has with the counselor. The applicant may or may not have an expectation of self-employment at this time. However, this meeting not only is needed to gather information for eligibility but gives both the counselor and applicant an opportunity to explore an individual's potential for self-employment. The counselor and individual may address the following questions:

1. What is your impairment with respect to DVR?
2. What are your abilities, impediments to employment, and rehabilitation needs?
3. What is your background, education, and/or work experience?
4. What work-related activities do you enjoy?
5. Are you interested in working for others or being self-employed?
6. What rehabilitation technology is needed to successfully complete an assessment?
7. What rehabilitation technology (after eligibility is determined) do you think will be needed to achieve a work goal?
8. What are your expectations with respect to assistance from DVR?
9. What is your understanding of informed choice regarding the services available from DVR?

Vocational Assessment

Concurrent with, or subsequent to, a determination of eligibility, a comprehensive assessment of the unique strengths, resources, priorities, interests and needs, including the need for supported self employment, will be conducted for the purpose of determining the goals, objectives, and nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services to be included in the IPE. This assessment can be conducted by the counselor/individual team by gathering available and existing information. This is especially relevant to the Transition individual where the school district has substantial information available.

If an individual expresses interest in self-employment an assessment of preferences, skills and willingness and ability to be self employed is essential. This assessment may be provided by the Certified Business and Technical Assistance Consultant (CBTAC). Some questions that may be asked are:

1. What functions are necessary for the business to operate?

2. What are the individual's current skills and abilities to performing the required business functions?
3. What are the gaps between business functions and individual's skills?
4. What resources or supports are needed to address the gaps?
 - Training
 - Job shadowing
 - Self-employment Coach
5. What job training/accommodations may be needed to enhance the business operation?
6. Does the individual have strong family support or can a strong support group be developed for him/her?
7. After analyzing the business functions, owner's skills, and supports and resources is the self-employment goal the right "business match"?
8. Is follow-along support services needed to assure success?

Assessment of Self-Employment Potential

With assistance from the DVR counselor and the CBTAC the individual may address the following questions:

1. Do you have experience in self-employment?
2. Why do you want to start your own business? Why is starting your own better for you than working as an employee in a business that is already established?
3. What personal or career goals and dreams do you hope to achieve? For example, are you looking for income, for community participation, for personal satisfaction in a particular type of work, for control over your work and schedule, or are you trying to achieve some other goal or combination of goals?
4. What don't you want to occur with this business? Describe your worst nightmare.
5. Imagine that your business has become a reality. What type of business or line of work do you imagine?
6. When you think about running your business, what day to day responsibilities do you see yourself involved in? What is your daily routine like? Does your daily activity excite you and offer the quality of life you are looking for?
7. What kind of work environment and "climate" – daily schedule, pace, social contract, and so on – are you looking for? What does that place look like and who do you come in contact with there? Does your imagined business provide these things for you?
8. What talents, training, or education do you have for the kind of work you are interested in?

9. What support do you have from others?
10. What accommodations, if any, are needed for your disability?
11. What type of commitment do you feel is necessary to make this business a success?
12. What specific products or services will you sell?
13. What information do you have that indicates that people will want to buy your products or services?
14. Who are your potential buyers?
15. Does anyone else in your community already sell the products or services you have in mind? If so, why do you think people might buy from you instead?
16. What equipment will you need to make or deliver your products or services?
17. Where will the business be located? How will customers hear about and obtain your products or services?
18. Why do you think that you will succeed?

Counselor Observations

Throughout the process, the counselor should be aware of the individual's planning skills, ability to develop a business plan, enthusiasm, initiative, and follow-through on deadlines. The counselor may find the answers to the following questions valuable:

1. What are the individual's physical and mental capabilities in relation to actual work requirements of the proposed business?
2. Does the individual have the necessary support system to provide assistance for those tasks that he/she cannot perform?
3. Does the individual have a clear goal and vision of the proposed business?
4. Does the individual have a reason for selecting the specific business as a self-employment enterprise?
5. Does the individual have specific or related experience to the selected business?
6. Does the individual have necessary transportation for the selected business?
7. Will the customer take courses to acquire necessary knowledge?
8. Does the individual have his or her own resources to invest into the business?
9. Does the individual have access to private resources other than his or her own?
10. Is the individual willing to take on debt to start the business?
11. Has the cost of starting the business been looked at realistically?
12. Have actual cost figures been secured?
13. Will equipment be rented, leased, or purchased, etc.?