

Memorandum of Understanding

Between the

Maine Department of Labor – Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

And the

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services

Memorandum of Understanding

Maine Department of Labor – Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

and

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Vocational Rehabilitation and
Employment Services**

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This Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter MOU) is between the Maine Department of Labor – Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services (VA-VR & E)

Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to set forth the commitments of BRS and VA-VR&E to cooperate to meet the needs of veterans with disabilities.

Objective

BRS and VA-VR & E are committed to work together to improve services and employment outcomes for veterans with disabilities. Through the efforts outlined in this agreement, BRS and VA-VR & E will strive to minimize duplication of services, improve information sharing and referral, and coordinate activities in accordance with all applicable statutes and regulations.

Authority

The legal basis for this MOU is found in the following statutes:

Sec. 100 (a)(2), Sec. 101 (a)(11)(C) and Sc. 101(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act as Amended

United States Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31, as amended
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S. C. S701 et seq.

Title 38 United States Code, as amended.

Funding

This MOU does not authorize any financial expenditure or commitment of funds. Nothing in this agreement shall be understood to limit, extend, or supersede any normal operations, legal obligations, or statutory requirements of the parties. There is, however, an expectation that in the development and implementation of services, BRS and VA-VR&E will provide in-kind resources and will promote cost efficiency and non-duplication through collaboration.

Program Descriptions

Maine Department of Labor - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Maine's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) assists eligible individuals with disabilities who wish to achieve or retain employment in the community. Any individual who is committed to work and has a disability that creates a barrier to employment is encouraged to apply for assistance. Services begin with an application, eligibility determination, and a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs. Counseling and guidance, the development of an individualized employment plan, and provision of services required for a specific employment goal then help people move to successful job placement.

Maine Department of Labor - Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The Maine DBVI Vocational Rehabilitation ("VR") program assists eligible individuals who have a visual impairment (and in addition may include physical and/or mental impairment) prepare for and achieve an employment outcome. "Employment outcome" means entering or retaining full-time employment; part-time competitive employment in the integrated labor market (including supported employment); the practice of a profession; self-employment; homemaking; business ownership; farm or family work (including work for which payment is in kind rather than in cash); home-based employment; or other gainful work. The VR process is based upon an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) which is oriented to the achievement of a suitable vocational goal consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Services provided to individuals with disabilities must be necessary to overcome the vocational impediment and must be provided as cost effectively as possible, and shall be of sufficient quality to meet individual needs. The DBVI VR program is operated in compliance with the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Veterans Affairs – Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Services

The purpose of the VR & E program is to provide services and assistance that will enable qualified veterans with service-connected disabilities to achieve, to the maximum extent possible, independence in daily living and/or to obtain and maintain suitable employment.

Services may include, but are not limited to: Comprehensive vocational evaluation; counseling and case management; medical and dental treatment; training to prepare for employment; payment of tuition, books, supplies, and fees associated with the training; subsistence allowance to cover miscellaneous expenses while in training; and placement assistance, including job seeking skills and resume development.

Responsibilities of Each Party

A. Referral and Eligibility

Veterans with disabilities may benefit from receiving services from either or both BRS and the VA-VR & E. The following will assist to promote smooth and effective referral processes:

- BRS will develop a Procedural Directive for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to address the standard protocol for referrals and applications from the VA-VR & E.
- BRS may refer veterans to VA-VR & E services if they believe that the veteran may be eligible for services. BRS will assist clients who are interested in applying for VA-VR&E services to complete the VA form 28-1900
- VA-VR & E may refer veterans for BRS services at any point while the veteran is being served by VA- VR & E, however in order to promote coordination of services, early referrals are encouraged.
- VA-VR&E will make referrals to BRS using BRS' standard referral form (attachment A).

Nothing in this MOU precludes a veteran from applying to BRS for services. A veteran who is found ineligible for VA – VR & E services may be referred to BRS. Any veteran referred for BRS services must meet eligibility requirements in order to receive services.

B. Information Sharing

With the appropriate signed releases, BRS and VA – VR & E will share records and other information without cost and in a timely manner. All

information will be shared in compliance with each agency's rules and procedures.

C. Plan Development & Service Delivery

As appropriate, BRS & VA-VR & E will coordinate the development of their respective employment plans to minimize duplication of services and to streamline the process for the veteran.

Career Exploration Workshop – The Career Exploration Workshop is a 5-day workshop series offered by BRS. The CEW is intended to assist clients to learn more about their strengths, interests and abilities in a supportive group setting in preparation for development of an Individualized Plan for Employment. Eligible veterans may participate in the CEW either prior or after referral to VA-VR & E.

D. Joint Activities

With a focus on collaboration and use of comparable benefits, BRS and VA-VR& E will jointly initiate the following:

- Staff Training –
 - Memorandum of Understanding - BRS & VA-VR & E will ensure that their respective agencies are aware of this Memorandum of Understanding and understand how to support its implementation.
 - BRS & VA -VR & E will provide each other's agencies with training on an annual basis on changes and updates in policy and service provision.
- Professional Development - BRS and VA-VR & E will promote opportunities for shared learning on rehabilitation topics.
- Designated Liaison – Each BRS – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation office will have an identified staff person who will serve as the liaison to the VA-VR & E. BRS - Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired will have one designated liaison in its central office. The names and contact information of these liaisons will be provided to the VA-VR&E staff and will be updated as needed. This does not preclude other staff from working with veterans or the VA (attachment B).
- Ongoing Review – BRS and VA-VR & E will establish regular communication, including a minimum of one annual meeting, to discuss service provision, case review, trouble shoot issues related to shared cases etc.

- Data sharing – BRS and VA-VR& E will share de-identified data on employment outcomes and needs of individuals served to improve planning and resource allocation.
- Employer Outreach – BRS and VA-VR & E will share information on employer outreach activities to ensure that employers have current information on best practices in hiring and maintaining employees who are veterans.
- Collaboration with VETS programs – In the execution of this MOU, BRS & VA-VR & E will seek to include the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) administered in Maine through the Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Employment Services (BES). When a veteran is being served, or could benefit by being served by the VETS program, BRS and & VA-VR & E will work in a team approach that recognizes the Memorandum of Agreement currently in place between the VA-VR&E, BES and the VETS program. BES will also be invited to participate in the ongoing review of this Memorandum of Understanding – as referenced above.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be maintained by each party in conformity with applicable laws and regulations. When confidential information is to be shared concerning a client, BRS and VA-VR & E will ensure that a release of information is in place before personally-identifiable information is discussed or released.

Due Process and Appeals

Recipients of services by the parties to this agreement will receive information on the due process and appeals procedures for the agency from which they are receiving the service.

Amendments and Termination

Changes or addendums to this MOU shall only be made upon written request from either party – following discussion and written agreement by both parties. The terms of this agreement shall not be waived, modified, or amended except by mutual written agreement.

This MOU will be reviewed by the parties on an annual basis. The MOU may be terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days written notice.

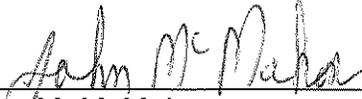
Signatures



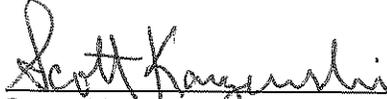
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Jeffrey Jones
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John M. McMahon
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Scott Karczewski
Regional Office Director
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MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF REHABILITATION SERVICES
REFERRAL TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Name of Referred: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

_____ Phone #: _____

Birth Date: _____ Sex: _____

Current Grade: _____

Disability:

Reason for Referral & Comments:

Signed: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Attachment A

Please attached additional available information
(See reverse side – “Release of Records Statement”)

RELEASE OF RECORDS STATEMENT

I hereby authorize the person, or agency, referring me to the Office of Rehabilitation Services to forward pertinent information relative to my disability. Examples of information which would be pertinent are medical reports no older than 3 years, psychiatric and/or psychological reports no older than 3 years and social/employment/or situational information which may clarify the limitations caused by my disability or handicapping condition. I hereby release this information to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services to be used in making a determination of eligibility for vocational Rehabilitation services and understand all information forwarded will be held confidential.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Attachment B

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation - Veterans Services Liaisons

Augusta

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