

Education Resource Guide for Students and Families

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Questions for Consideration and Exploration	What do you want to do? Will the goal meet your needs? Are there steps involved? Does this goal require education or training? What are the options for exploration for High School/GED/HSED students?	Is training required for your vocational goal? Is it a Business Recognized Credential? What questions should you ask when selecting or reevaluating a training program?	What is the location? What does the data tell you? What steps are necessary to go to school there? What supports are available?	What are prerequisites and requirements for ALL students? What do I need to do if I am a High School/GED/HSED student? What do I need to do if I am an older student?	How do I use financial aid/scholarships? How does the DVR training grant work? What do I need to know if I receive public benefits (Social Security, Workers' Compensation, VA)? Can I work while in school? What do I need to know about student debt?	How do I use an academic course schedule to stay on track? How do measure progress and identify roadblocks? How do I use educational/training resources for employment during my program?
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Resources for DVR Counselors

Notes:

► Choosing an Employment (IPE) Goal

Choosing an employment goal is the first step. It may take a while for you to decide what kind of job you want. Most of the time people do a lot of exploration and try different kinds of jobs before they decide on and plan for a job. Ask yourself the questions below. You may move around between the questions and steps before you make any decisions. Your DVR Counselor is available to help you.

What do you want to do?

- How do you like spending your time?
- Is there a class you have taken where you did well?
- Are there some jobs you know you do not want?
- Are there hobbies that you like?
- Have other people told you that you would be good at a certain type of job?
- How have you explored different jobs?
- Do you know someone who does this type of job?
- Have you visited a workplace?
- Have you tried out the job?

Will the goal meet your needs?

- If you have chosen a job, how many hours will you be expected to work (full or part-time)?
- What is the typical hourly wage or salary?
- If you are getting public or other benefits, have you had a benefits analysis?
- Where are the expected job openings?
- Is there any part of the job that you think will be difficult?
- Do you think you will require accommodations to work in that job?
- How have you found out more information about the job in which you are interested?
- Have you visited a workplace?
- Have you tried out the job?
- Do you know what tasks make up the job? If so, are they a good fit for your skills, interests, and abilities?

Are there steps involved?

- Is there an expected training program or schooling required?
- How long will the training take?
- Are you willing to put in the time to reach the goal?
- Do you know what type of training is required?
- Do you know where the schools are for the training?
- Will you need to move?
- Have you completed a job shadow or informational interview?
- Have you talked to DVR? Do they agree that this is a good goal for you?

Does this goal require education or training?

- Do you have the skills now or can you learn the skills to do the job?
- Is the job market competitive?
- What is the training?
- Where is the training/school?

- How long will it take?
- Will it lead to an accepted certificate or credential?
- How much will it cost?

Other Assignments

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Web Links

- [JobNet](#)
- [WorkNet](#)
- [Skill Explorer](#)
- [My Next Move](#)

RESOURCES

Supporting Documents/Guides

Printed Documents Available at all Wisconsin high schools can be ordered by WDA [via DPI Publishing](#).

- Opening Doors to Post-Secondary: Planning for Life after High School
- Opening Doors to Self Determination Skills
- Opening Doors: Transition Resources
- Opening Doors: A Guide to Adult Services

[Toolkits](#) are available from the Board for People with Developmental

Disabilities **Options for Exploration High School/GED/HSED Students**

- [Career Cruising](#)
- [Academic and Career Plans](#)

*NOTE: Some sites may require login/password.

Adult/Career Professional Level Resources

- [Ten Tips on Starting a New Career](#)

- [Link](#) to "How to Successfully Change Careers"

► Choosing an Educational/Training Program

Once you have selected a goal, it may be necessary for you to go to school or participate in a specific training program. It is important that you choose a program that will meet the requirements of your job goal. Not all programs are equal. Ask yourself the questions below. You may move around between the questions and steps before you make any decisions. Your DVR Counselor is available to help you and may suggest some ideas to help you find answers.

Is training required for your vocational goal?

- What is the expected academic or training requirement for people working in the job that you want?
- Have you researched required training by asking existing businesses?
- Have you talked to someone who is doing the job that you want?
- Have you researched required training by completing internet research or reviewed other written material?
- If you are a high school student, have you researched required training by asking high school personnel?

Is it a business-recognized credential?

- Does the training you are considering meet the requirements of your chosen job?
- How do you know?
- Is there a state licensing requirement?
- Is the program accredited/does it meet an expected standard?
- Is there going to be more than one training required to reach your chosen job?
- Is there going to be additional hours of practice required to reach your chosen job goal?
- Once you have reached your job goal, is there a requirement for continuing education?

What questions should you ask when selecting or reevaluating a training program? Below you will find listings of the academic, financial, and disability-related questions to consider when making your training program selection or reevaluating your current program:

Academic Considerations

- What are the job placement and graduate report statistics (from an independent source)?
- Is there online availability (communication accessibility, travel)?
- What are the internship rates?
- Is there an offering for a unique area of specialty to help with employment?
- Does your IPE goal require attendance in a specialized training program?
- Compared to in-state programs, are the admission requirements or academic rigor of the program lesser or greater?
- Is there a work experience component in the academic schedule?
- What are the real or expected time delays (i.e. waiting lists, course availability) for the program?
- Is there accreditation and ability for licensure for the IPE goal if this is necessary?

Financial Considerations (see also: [Paying For your Educational or Training Program](#))

- Are scholarships or other financial sources available?
- What living arrangements are allowed by the school?
- Are there academic scholarships to consider?
- Are there athletic or other scholarships (non-academic) to consider?

Disability Considerations

- What are the physical and mental demands of the training program?
- What accommodations can be made to assist you?
- Can some more difficult elements/courses be waived?
- Will you need to move and live on campus?
- Will you need accommodations to live on campus?

Other Assignments

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RESOURCES

Web Links

- [Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services](#)
- [College Navigator](#)

Federal Student Aid - Checklist for Educational and Financial Preparation:

- [9th Grade](#)
- [10th Grade](#)
- [11th Grade](#)
- [12th Grade](#)

Supporting Documents and Guides

- [Federal Student Aid - Choosing a School](#)

► Choosing a School

It is important for you to compare different schools and programs if there is more than one that will meet your goal. Ask yourself the questions below. You may move around between the questions and steps before you make any decisions. Your DVR Counselor is available to help you and may suggest activities and resources to help answer the questions.

What is the location?

- Will you need to move?
- Can you commute?
- Are the classes and activities in the same location? (multiple campuses/locations)
- Is the school out of state?
- Will there be increased costs because of the location?

What does the data tell

you? Financial:

- What does the financial aid package look like?
- Do you know what the DVR training grant amount will be?

Program/school data:

- Is the school approved and in good standing?
- Schools are required to report their program graduate success rates. Find out the following:
 - What is the completion rate?
 - What is the wage/salary of recent graduates?
 - How many of the graduates got jobs in the field/area of study?

What steps are necessary to go to school there?

- What is the application process?
- Are you qualified to be accepted?
- How do you know?
- What is your plan if you do not get accepted?
- What are your options?
- Will you need to change your employment goal if you do not get accepted?
- Are you applying to multiple schools?
- How did you decide which school(s) will meet your needs?
- What are the deadlines?
- How/when will you know you have been accepted into the program?
- Do you know the difference between school and program acceptance?
- Is there testing required?
- Do you know what the tests are?
- Will you need to arrange for accommodations to apply or for other admission requirements?
- Is there a waiting list for the program you want?
- What documents will you need to collect and send?
- Have you applied for financial aid?
- How do you connect with the office for students with disabilities?

What supports are available?

- Will you need accommodations to attend the program?
- Will you need accommodations to participate in activities outside of the classroom?
- Do you have the necessary disability records and know how to request them?
- Do you understand the process for requesting accommodations?
- Have you connected with the office for students with disabilities?
- Will you need specialized equipment related to your disability or other program requirement?

Other Assignments

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RESOURCES

Web links

- [Educational Approval Program](#) (formerly Educational Approval Board)
- [Federal Student Aid](#) - Taking Required Tests

Supporting Documents / Guides

- [Pathways 2 Positive Futures](#) - Handout on Types of Schools
- [Federal Student Aid](#) - Choosing a School
- [College Simply](#) (Enter in GPA and test scores to get a listing of schools where you may gain acceptance)

► Getting Ready for an Educational/Training Program

It is important for you to be prepared for your school or training program. Ask yourself the questions below. You may move around between the questions and steps before you take further action. Your DVR Counselor is available to help you and may suggest activities and resources to help you answer the questions.

What are prerequisites and requirements for ALL students?

- Have you been accepted into the academic program or the school for general education?
- Have you identified program length, requirements, and prerequisites?
- Have you talked with your identified academic program counselor/advisor?
- Have you registered with the office for students with disabilities?
- Have you completed all admission steps? **Confirm with the school.**
- Have you completed all admission steps? For financial aid, see [Paying for your Educational or Training Program](#).
- Do you know how to register for classes?
- Do you have your living situation/housing secured?
- Do you know and understand your available transportation options?
- Are you aware of all necessary deadlines?
- Do you know what books and supplies are required?

What do I need to do if I am a High School/GED/HSED student?

- Have you submitted your test scores (e.g., ACT, SAT, AP, or on-campus testing)?
- Have you sent in your final high school transcript?
- Did you get your diploma?
- Have you met with an academic advisor and verified your schedule and carry over credits (if applicable)?
- Is prerequisite or remedial course work needed? If so, what courses, and when do they need to be completed?
- Do you have advanced coursework to apply to your program (AP or college courses)?

What do I need to do if I am an older student?

- Have you submitted your test scores? (e.g., ACT, SAT, AP, or on-campus testing)?
- Have you sent in your final high school or other school transcript(s)?
- Have you met with an academic advisor and verified your schedule and carry over credits (if applicable)?
- Is prerequisite or remedial course work needed? If so, what courses, and when do they need to be completed?

Other Assignments

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RESOURCES

Web Links

- Department of Education [FAFSA preparation checklists](#) for students and adults
- UW System [link](#)
- [Wisconsin Tech College System](#)
- [WAICU](#) (Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities):
- Federal Student Aid - [Estimating your Aid](#)

Supporting Documents and Guides

- [10 Things You Should Know Before You Start College](#)

► Paying for your Educational/Training Program

It is important for you to understand how your program will be paid. It will likely be paid using multiple sources, each source with its own requirements and responsibilities. Ask yourself the questions below. You may move around between the questions and steps before taking action. Your DVR Counselor is available to help you and may suggest activities and resources to help you answer the questions.

How do I use financial aid/scholarships?

- Have you applied as early as possible for financial aid each year (January 1)? Tax filing is not required.
- Have you reviewed what specialized scholarships you may be eligible for with the financial aid office and your program advisor? These can be based on ethnicity, school program, religion, GPA, gender, disability, income, etc.
- Have you agreed to accept work-study?
- Do you have an expected family contribution (EFC)?
- Will you be considered an emancipated student?
- Will your family be assisting you with educational costs? If so, how will your family be assisting with these costs?

How does the DVR training grant work?

- Do you know how to get a copy of the DVR training grant?
- Do you understand how it is completed?
- Do you know what DVR includes as the DVR cost of attendance budget?
- Do you understand what your responsibilities are?
- Do you know what you need to do if there is a problem?

What do I need to know if I receive public benefits (e.g., Social Security, Veteran Services, Workers' Compensation)?

- Have you had a benefits analysis to determine how to use work incentives?
- Do you know if you can accept work-study as a form of income while in school? If so, have you planned how you will use work incentives and report earnings to Social Security and others?
- Have you looked into all the benefits for which you may be entitled or eligible (e.g., housing, food assistance)?

Can I work while I'm in school?

- Can you hold a job while you are in school?
- How would a job affect your school progress? Your disability?
- Will working help you establish professional-level work skills, credentials, or references once your program is complete?
- Have you looked into employment options on and off campus?

What do I need to know about student debt?

- Are you attending a for-profit school?
- Have you calculated the costs of attendance for the whole program?

- What financial resources do you or your parents have to fund your program?
- Have you accepted student loans? If so, do you know what type of loans you took and when you need to begin to pay?
- Do you know how to pay?
- Do you need to ask for a loan deferment?

Other Assignments

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RESOURCES

Web Links

- [Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board](#)
- [Federal Student Aid website](#)
- [ABLE Accounts](#)
- [Wisconsin 529 Plans](#)

Supporting Documents /Guides

- Federal Student Aid - [Adult Checklist for Educational and Financial Preparation](#)
- Federal Student Aid - [Creating Your Budget](#)

Calculators

- [Financial Aid Loan Calculator](#)
- [Mapping Your Future - Debt Wizard](#)
- [Federal Student Aid-Repayment Estimator](#)

► Making the Most of your Education/Training Program

While you are in school, it is important for you to use all options and resources available to help you become employed so that you can reach your goals. Ask yourself the questions below. You may move around between the questions and steps before you take further action. Your DVR Counselor is available to help you and may suggest activities and resources to help you answer the questions.

How do I use an academic course schedule to stay on track?

- Do you have a copy of the suggested course of study for your program, often called an *academic course schedule*?
- Have you provided a copy of your academic course schedule to DVR?
- Have you reviewed your academic course schedule with DVR and your academic advisor?
- Does your progress match up? If not, why not?
- Do you need to take a course during the summer or other alternative term, like a *Winterim*, to get back on track?
- If there is a lack of progress, does it affect your financial aid status with your school?
- If there is a lack of progress, does it affect your DVR training grant?
- Stay current with the schedule/catalog in case of changes.
- Student should be encouraged to meet with the school academic advisor as needed and close to graduation.
- Have you taken courses outside of requirements? If so, why? (e.g., trying out a different area of interest, adding to employability skills)

How do measure progress and identify roadblocks?

- Are you having difficulty with a particular course or type of course?
- Would a tutor or other special assistance help you to complete the requirement?
- Have you had to drop classes during a semester because you have not done well in a class?
- Do you take advantage of study assistance provided by your school for all students?
- Have you requested accommodations or other assistance to address your disability in class?
- Have you talked to a program counselor or advisor when you have struggled?
- Are you still motivated to reach your employment goal?

How do I use educational/training resources for employment during my program?

- Are you aware of the built-in employment-related aspects of your training program?
- Have you sought out or taken advantage of the built-in employment-related aspects of your training program?
- Have you worked while in school and tried to build on previous experience?
- Have you done networking and received references that you can use professionally?
- Does your chosen occupation require specialized professional credentials (e.g., portfolios, CV, photos)?
- Does it make sense for someone in your program to take a semester abroad?
- Have you reached out to or participated in any of the following:
 - Job Centers?
 - Internship seminars?
 - Built-in programming or academic work-based opportunities (student teaching)?
 - Campus job/career fairs?

- Resume preparation mini courses?
- Networking with instructors and fellow students?
- On campus newspaper for posted job openings relevant to your goal?
- Work study with your school/school department through financial aid?
- Internships/fellowships offered by your school/school department?
- Licensure training by your school/school department?
- Related professional organizations that offer student participation?
- Volunteer work that offers skill building opportunity?
- Student organizations that offer skill building opportunities?
- On campus employment activities?

Other Assignments

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RESOURCES

Web links

- [Money Crashers](#) - What to Do in College to get the Most out of Your Experience

DVR COUNSELOR RESOURCES

► Choosing an Employment (IPE) Goal

- [Your Employment Plan](#) (Consumer Handout)
- [Use of Paid Work Options](#)
- [Youth On-the-Job Training](#)
- [DVR Youth Transition Services](#)
- [Career Exploration](#)

► Choosing an Educational or Training Program

- [Transition Action Guide](#)
- [Transition Action Guide: Short Version](#)
- [Text Law](#) (School Accommodations)

► Choosing a School

► Getting Ready for an Educational or Training Program

► Paying For your Educational or Training Program

- [DVR Training Grant Webpage](#)
- [DVR Training Grant Checklist](#) (Consumer Handout)

► Making the Most of your Education or Training Program

- [Internship/Temporary Work Website](#)
- [Internship/Temporary Work Guidance](#)
- [Summer School Work Activities for Post-Secondary Students](#)

► General Resources

- [Pathways 2 Positive Futures](#)
(features multiple handouts related to transition, mental health, and self-advocacy)
- [Department of Education – FAFSA](#)
- [Department of Public Instruction](#)
- [DVR School Liaison Counselors](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2025 (FFY 2025), the total amount of grant funds awarded were \$87,214,145, including \$15,522,975 reserved for Pre-Employment Transition Services. The remaining 21.3% (\$23,604,337) of the costs were funded by Wisconsin state appropriations.