

## Announcing Public Meetings on Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The New York State Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR), with the State Rehabilitation Council, is seeking input on proposed policy changes related to Employment Outcome, Supported Employment; Student and Youth Services; and, a new policy to implement requirements related to Limitations on Subminimum Wage Employment.

To assist in the development of these policies, individuals with disabilities, their families, advocates, employers and service providers are invited to attend the public meetings to provide comments. The public comment period extends from November 8, 2016 through December 23, 2016.

The identified ACCES-VR policies must be changed or developed so as to align program service to new requirements established by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a federal law designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regulations can be accessed at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15980.pdf>.

ACCES-VR's current policies may be accessed at: <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/vocational-rehabilitation-policies-and-procedures>

Location	Date	Time
Harlem State Office Building 163 W 124 <sup>th</sup> St. New York, NY 10027	<b>November 8, 2016</b>	<b>10:00 am - 1:00 pm</b>
Rochester ACCES-VR District Office 109 South Union St. Rochester, NY 14607  <b>Video-conferencing sites:</b>  <u>Buffalo, Hauppauge, Malone,</u> <u>Southern Tier – Binghamton,</u> <u>and Syracuse</u> ACCES-VR District Offices	<b>November 10, 2016</b>	<b>10:00 am - 1:00 pm</b>
Albany Public Library 161 Washington Ave. Albany, NY 12210	<b>November 17, 2016</b>	<b>12:30 pm - 3:30 pm</b>
Garden City ACCES-VR District Office 711 Stewart Avenue Suite 4 Garden City, NY 11530  <b>Video-conferencing site:</b>  <u>Queens</u> ACCES-VR District Office	<b>November 22, 2016</b>	<b>10:00 am - 1:00 pm</b>
Call in number for comments if unable to attend:  Dial-in #: 1-866-394-2346 Conference Code: 1492305463	<b>December 5, 2016</b>	<b>9:30 am - 12:00 pm</b>

\* Individuals participating in the November 10<sup>th</sup> video conference will view the public hearing held in ACCES-VRs Rochester District Office. Individuals participating in the November 22<sup>nd</sup> video conference will view the public hearing held in ACCES-VRs Garden City District Office. All participants viewing public hearings via video conferencing will have the opportunity to provide oral testimony.

**\*\* Photo identification is required for all sites.**

The identified ACCES-VR policies must be changed or developed so as to align program service to new requirements established by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. A very brief overview of the changes follows:

**Employment Outcome is defined as:**

- Competitive Integrated Employment, with the opportunity for advancement.
- Homemaker and Unpaid Family worker are no longer employment outcomes under the VR program.
- Group and enclave settings must be assessed against detailed parameters around the definition of integrated employment.

**Supported Employment**

- Extends the time frame for the provision of intensive supported employment services from 18 to 24 months.
- VR program funds may now be used for providing extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

**Student and Youth Services**

- The scope of vocational rehabilitation services is expanded to include newly defined Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities.
- 15% of VR dollars must be used to deliver the required activities under Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) for students with disabilities.

**Subminimum Wage Employment**

- ACCES-VR must provide career counseling and information and referral services to individuals with disabilities regardless of age who are known by ACCES-VR to be employed at subminimum wage.
- The information and referral services must be carried out according to prescribed time intervals for the duration of such employment.

Individuals will be allocated five minutes to provide oral testimony. Comments and recommendations may be submitted in writing or electronically. Written comments can be sent to: NYS Education Department, ACCES-VR Resource Development Unit-EBA 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Albany, NY 12234. Electronic submissions can be sent to [VRpolicy@nysed.gov](mailto:VRpolicy@nysed.gov).

These meetings are held at accessible sites. Copies of materials will be made available at each session. Upon request, materials will be made available in alternate format. Interpreters are provided only upon request. To request an interpreter or other accommodations, contact ACCES-VR by calling 1-800-222-5627 (voice or TTY) at least 10 days in advance of the meeting and reference "Public Hearing on VR Policy" or email [VRpolicy@nysed.gov](mailto:VRpolicy@nysed.gov).

Comments and recommendations that respond to the questions below would be of major assistance.

**Employment Outcome**

1. When could a group setting meet the definition of integration?
2. What should be the ACCES-VR steps or process if an individual chooses, or could benefit from, a non-integrated or subminimum wage option?

**Supported Employment**

1. What impact should the change to the timeframe for intensive services, from 18 months to 24 months (before the need of a waiver) have on the process?
2. How can supported employment be more effective for students and youth with disabilities?
3. What is currently working well in the supported employment process? And, what gaps or problems exist? How could any service gaps or problems be addressed through policy change?

**Student and Youth Services**

1. How can ACCES-VR be certain that all students with disabilities that need the required Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) are receiving those services?
2. What should be expected of special education and from the local education agencies? And, how will ACCES-VR work with the schools to be sure all students with disabilities receive Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS)?
3. What works well with the current ACCES-VR Transition Policy? What gaps or challenges have been experienced? How might those gaps or challenges be addressed?

#### Limitations on the Use of Subminimum Wage

1. The Office for People with Developmental Disabilities has been working with providers that hold 14 c certificates. How could ACCES-VR and OPWDD work to ensure a coordinated process?
2. What type of information would be most valuable for individuals receiving subminimum wage?