



HOW MANY OF YOU REMEMBER?



VR HELP DESK!!!!!!



2022 TPSID Project Director's Meeting

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Presented by the Think College "VR Dude"

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ABOUT YOUR "CRYPT KEEPER" . . .



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- 32-year history with Vocational Rehabilitation
- Technical Assistance Content Specialist in
 - Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
 - Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE)
 - Business Engagement of People w/ Disabilities
 - Organizational Improvement and Cultural Change
 - Leadership and Supervision

TODAY'S OBJECTIVES



- Address 4 common "Tales"
- For Each:
 - Review Background, Regulation, & Reality
 - Briefly Discuss
 - Share Solution Options
- Finish with Question & Answer Time

TALE #1

“VR cannot provide support for inclusive postsecondary education” or “We don't do that.”

TALE #1 BACKGROUND

- Historically, expectations for individuals with intellectual disabilities have traditionally been low, until the late 1980's for employment.
- Employment realities for individuals with IDD started to change around 1990 for VR with the advent of the Supported Employment (SE) program.
 - 1990-Present data has led to a significant shift from "being unemployable" to SE (and variations of it) being the "go to" service for IDD in VR agencies
- IPSE is the new "Supported Employment"
 - Data is showing the Postsecondary Education capacity and impact on employment.

TALE #1 REGULATION

34 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATION (CFR) 361

- **34 CFR 361.52:** “The vocational rehabilitation services portion of the State Plan must assure that . . . recipients of services or, as appropriate, their representatives are provided information and support services to assist applicants and recipients of services in exercising ***informed choice*** throughout the rehabilitation process.” (emphasis added)
- **VR Pre-Employment Transition Services. Required (34 CFR 361.48 (a)(2)(iii):** “Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs.”

TALE #1 REGULATION

34 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATION (CFR) 361

- **361.50 Written policies governing the provision of services for individuals with disabilities.** (a) *Policies.* The State unit must develop and maintain written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services specified in § 361.48 and the criteria under which each service is provided. The policies must ensure that the provision of services is based on the rehabilitation needs of each individual as identified in that individual's individualized plan for employment and is consistent with the individual's informed choice. The written policies may not establish any arbitrary limits on the **nature** and **scope** of vocational rehabilitation services to be provided to the individual to achieve an employment outcome. (emphasis added)

TALE #1 REALITY

- Regulatory language is valuable to know but be careful not to “weaponize” it. It will not help.
- The value of IPSE completion in today’s labor market is supported by the following findings:
 - “Individuals with at least some postsecondary education have captured 11.5 million of the 11.6 million jobs created since 2007, whereas individuals with a high school diploma or less education have faced a net loss of more than 5.5 million jobs since 2007.
 - Today, there is consensus among experts and practitioners that postsecondary education or training is the new minimum for succeeding in today’s economy.”*
- Engaging VR to support IPSE is going to require IPSE programs to:
 - Have competency-based certifications, particularly skills most sought after by business.
 - Talk the language that VR understands.

*Carnevale, A. P., Jayasundera, T., & Gulish, A. (2016). *America’s divided recovery: College have and have-nots*. Retrieved from Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce website: <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Americas-Divided-Recovery-web.pdf>, and 2. Watson, A. (2017, September). Employment trends by typical entry-level education requirement. *Monthly Labor Review*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.21916/mlr.2017.22>

TALE #2

“VR does not provide funding of inclusive postsecondary education” or “will only pay for certain classes.”

TALE #2 BACKGROUND

- States have funded postsecondary education (PSE) for decades.
- States vary in the degree they fund PSE, with education-oriented states more supportive of this service than states less strongly oriented.
- Approval authority for PSE support funding varies state by state:
 - Counselor level
 - Supervisory level
 - Administrative level
- There appears to be no real correlation between a state's degree of support for PSE, and their support of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE).
- With growing exceptions, state VR agencies struggle to justify funding IPSE due to recency of IPSE, misperceptions, misinformation, culture, and cost.

TALE #2 REGULATION

- There is intent language in VR regulations (comment section) that references how VR support is expected to align with the Higher Education Act of 2008.
- “Similarly, we clarify here that the vocational and other training services specified in final § 361.48(b)(6) encompass tuition and other services for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities in a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities, as defined by the Higher Education Act of 2008.”

TALE #2 REALITY

- Services provided by VR agencies are, by legal definition, to be;
 - provided on an individualized basis,
 - determined between each person and their VR counselor, and
 - established through comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs based on “strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, informed choice, and economic self-sufficiency.”
- Per the Act and subsequent federal regulations, state VR programs cannot legally “categorically deny” provision of any service.

TALE #3

“VR tells us that they will pay for one student but not another student in our program.”

TALE #3 BACKGROUND

- This "tale" is a little more situational, and not as clear cut as Tale #2 we just covered.
- Reasons behind why one individual is funded for an IPSE program, while another is not, can be varied, and the most common reasons are;
 - Services are individualized and based on comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation need
 - Financial Needs Assessment (where applicable)
 - Order of selection

TALE #3 REGULATION

- Individualized services and comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation need. (Covered in Tale #2)
- Financial Needs Assessment
 - Federal Regulation provides states to apply an individualized needs test for paid VR services, but NOT as a factor in eligibility for VR services.
 - Some forms of income (SSDI, SSI, TANF) and services (counseling, guidance, job placement) are exempted from needs testing.
- Order of Selection
 - Provides for states to create a "wait list" when demand exceeds resources and is based on significance (not type) of disability.

TALE #3 REALITY

- Financial Needs Test:
 - While it is not mandatory for states to apply a financial needs test, most states do so.
- Order of Selection
 - With no significant increases of VR funding, increases in referrals, and rising costs of services, more and more states have been utilizing Order of Selection.

TALE #4

“VR states that because we don’t result in an Industry Recognized Credential, they cannot pay for our program.”

TALE #4 HISTORY

- With WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act),
 - Greater emphasis on the workforce innovation system to assist workers to gain Industry Recognized Credentials
 - The driver of this WIOA language is the progression of labor market demands for increased/more refined skills from the talent pool to meet business needs.

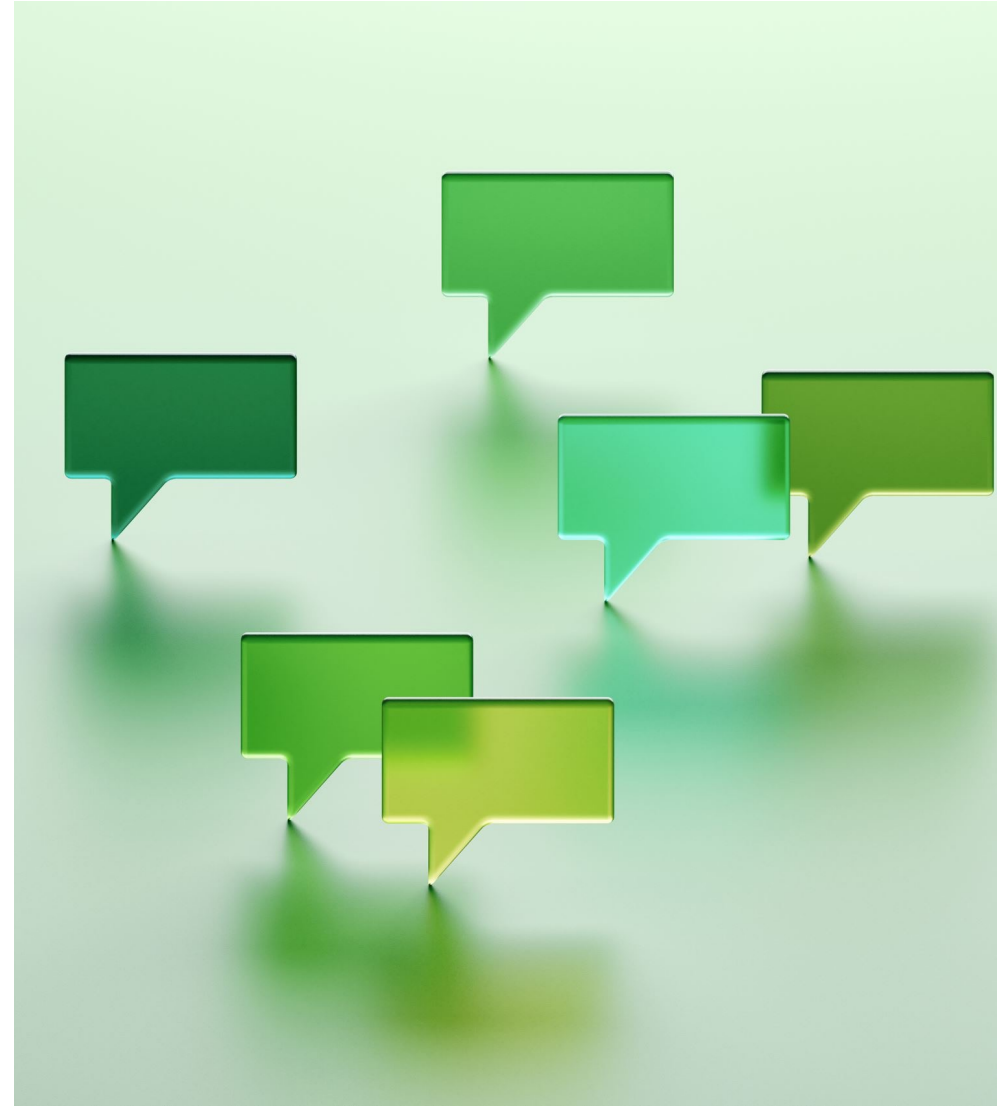
TALE #4 REGULATION

- WIOA defines “recognized postsecondary credential” as “a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.”
- Sub-regulatory guidance from DOL (TEGL #10-16) cites:
 - “WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014, is 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.”

TALE #4 REALITY

- While WIOA establishes that the workforce innovation system is to lead to Industry Recognized Credentials, it does not put that responsibility solely on the Vocational Rehabilitation part of that system.
- This means that VR is not required have to have every success include an Industry Recognized Credential. (In fact, more of their successes do not have an accompanying IRC)
- To the degree that your program can/will establish industry recognized credentials (including micro-credentials) you enhance your ability to have partnership success with your VR agencies.
 - OSHA 10-Hour Course
 - Food Handler's Card/Permit
 - ServSafe
 - CPR & First Aid Certification
 - Adobe or Microsoft Certifications
 - Certified Guest Professional (AHLEI)

LET'S TALK
ABOUT IT



QUESTIONS?



VR Affinity Group



An online community for discussion of issues, strategies and results related to the partnership between VR and IPSE programs.

To become a member of this Affinity Group, go to <https://thinkcollege.net/technical-assistance/affinity-groups/vocational-rehabilitation> and click on the “Sign Up Now!” tab.



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