
Consumer Contact Standards

Updated June 2014

Purpose

To communicate to DVR staff why there are contact standards and the procedures necessary to insure the standards are met.

Rationale

The Rehabilitation Act requires that the consumer fully participate in the rehabilitation process and exercise informed choice at all stages in the rehabilitation process. Keeping in contact will ensure that each consumer has opportunity to achieve these requirements of the Rehabilitation Act.

Furthermore, the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation believes that maintaining meaningful and active contact with all consumers will result in more timely rehabilitations, more timely identification of IPE difficulties, and fewer failures due to loss of contact.

Also, the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation believes that there is an ethical responsibility to maintain active cases and up-to-date documentation so that in an order of selection wait list environment consumer can be activated as quickly as possible.

Procedure

Every consumer with an IPE or in IPE development will have a significant contact with DVR every **30 days at a minimum and more frequently as appropriate and reasonable**. The contact(s) are to be documented in an IRIS casenote.

Significant contact consists of a phone call, or a person to person meeting during which the consumer updates a DVR staff person regarding how IPE activities are progressing and whether there are any IPE VR needs which were not previously anticipated. An email message or letter received from the consumer which contains the required information can be substituted for significant contact.

It is expected that DVR staff will take this opportunity to inquire as to whether the consumer fully understands the rehabilitation process and to evaluate whether the consumer has the information necessary to exercise informed choice in implementation of the IPE. The IPE must be reviewed at least once per year as part of the contact schedule.

In the event that contact does not occur as directed, it is further directed that the next casenote in the IRIS case record must contain an explanation of why the 30 day contact did not occur and information about what has occurred in IPE activities since the last contact.

Procedure for Alternate Contact Standard

DVR staff and consumers now have the option of modifying the standard to address individual circumstances. If DVR staff and a consumer reach agreement on a modified contact schedule, the following must occur:

- Frequency of contacts and the timeframe within which the contacts will occur must be documented in the consumer's case record (best practice: document in the IPE).
- The rationale for the modified contact schedule must be documented in the consumer's case record.

Examples of modified contact schedules are as follows:

- A consumer who is completing a technical college degree and is meeting all progress measures. Contact with DVR once a semester may be appropriate.
- A consumer who is gathering information necessary to develop his/her IPE. Monthly contact or contact every two weeks may be appropriate.