

Existing Business Policy

A Guide to Successful Outcomes

Vocational Rehabilitation

This Existing Business Policy guides staff in DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in working with consumers whose goal is to maintain employment through their existing business. DVR can assist existing business owners with information, referral, and assistive technology services that are needed due to disability-related barriers affecting their ability to perform tasks that are essential to their job.

What Is Considered an Existing Business?

The business is a for-profit based in Wisconsin, the consumer is a documented legal owner, and the business taxes are current.

What/Who Does Not Qualify under the Policy?

- Starting a new business
- Purchasing an existing business
- Employees of a business
- Businesses that do not file annual taxes
- Diversifying an existing business (e.g., increase revenue through a new profit arm)
- Existing businesses whose goal is to change their operation (e.g., changing the scope of their business)
- Expanding or growing an existing business
- Independent contractors who are classified as an employee by the IRS
- Multi-level marketing or pyramid selling businesses
- Businesses that do not comply with the IRS
- Hobbies (as determined through the Employment and Wage Assessment)

What is the Assistive Technology (AT) Assessment?

DVR will authorize a Service Provider to conduct an assistive technology assessment, which is an assessment that identifies items, devices, or equipment needed to help the consumer perform essential functions of their job.

What is the Fee Schedule?

In accordance with federal guidelines, DVR has established a fee schedule for assistive technology and other services to ensure reasonable costs. An exception can be considered if necessary purchases exceed the fee schedule amount.

What is An Exception Request?

Consumers may request approval for a purchase that exceeds an established fee schedule or DVR policy. The Exception Request requires approval by DVR management.

How Can I Apply for an Exception?

The Exception Request form can be found on the [DVR website](#). Consumers should work with their DVR contacts to complete the form. Once the request has been completed and submitted, DVR generally reviews the request within ten (10) business days and provides the Consumer with a written decision, including appeal rights information if the request is denied.

Existing Business Policy: 10-Step Overview

1 Initial Conversations

- Speak with a DVR representative about your interest in self-employment and gather information to determine the appropriate DVR path.

2 Validate the Self-Employment Vocational Goal

- Information will be collected by DVR to assess and determine your ability to do essential job tasks safely.
- This will determine whether it is appropriate to continue with the Existing Business Policy.

3 Employment and Wage Assessment (EWA)

- Determine if your wages earned are above minimum wage, or comparable to a similar business.
- This assessment will be conducted by CAP Services, Inc. Refer to, "Employment and Wage Assessment" Handout for more information.

4 Develop Self-Employment IPE

- With DVR, develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for the approved vocational goal.
- The plan will include the services, responsibilities, progress measures, and timelines necessary to address the disability-related factors that affect your ability to do your essential job tasks.

5 Perform the Business Walk-Through

- Complete the Existing Business Review Form prior to the visit.
- DVR will visit the business site and discuss:
 - The business
 - Job duties for you and all workers
 - Any other assessments that may be needed

6 Authorization for the Assistive Technology (AT) Assessment

- Used to determine reasonable, necessary, and appropriate assistive technology available to address documented disability and health-related limitations.

7 Review the AT Assessment Report

- DVR will discuss the recommendations in the AT Assessment report with you to determine if the suggested assistive technology will address your limitations.

8 Amend the IPE

- Add the list of DVR-supported assistive technology and agreed upon timelines.
- DVR's purchase of service does not begin until the services and goods are included in the IPE and all consumer obligations have been met.

9 Service Delivery and Follow Along

- DVR staff and the consumer will maintain communication to share frequent updates on the progress of the case. DVR staff will continue to provide guidance and counseling and other supports as necessary and appropriate.

10 Wage Verification and Case Closure

- A consumer's case is closed 90 days after all assistive technology that DVR has agreed to provide has been received, is operational, and the consumer is stable in performing their essential work tasks.
- Wage verification is completed with the consumer.