

Tlingit & Haida Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation

12) What if I don't have the skills and need training? Sometimes a person spends their career in one profession or occupation and may not have any other skills necessary to attain new employment. If this is you, you are a prime candidate to receive training, but please keep in mind that the goal of training is to get you back to work. If your goal is to be employed in your community in a specific field, training will greatly increase your chances to success. A good plan depends on you and your counselor talking over training plans and employment opportunities in your community.

13) OK. I've been trained, now what? We will provide you services to assist you in attaining employment.

14) OK. I've been hired for a job. Now what? Your counselor will track your progress on the job usually for a period of 90 days to make sure everything goes well and to provide support if necessary. If after a period of 90 days you are still working, then your counselor will close your file out as a positive placement.

Note: This guide is intended to provide a basic understanding of how the program operates. It is my hope this information will assist Alaska Natives/Native Americans with disabilities decide if they should apply for services. If you have any additional questions or concerns you may call the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation program at (907) 789-4264 and ask for any Vocational Rehabilitation staff.

Thank you for your interest in our program.



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TRIBAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

A QUESTION AND ANSWER GUIDE TO VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

- 1) **Who is eligible to receive services?** If you are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe, live in the Southeast Alaska area, and have a disability that is an impediment to your employment, you may be eligible to receive services.
 - 2) **How does your program define a disability?** A disability is any medical condition (physical or mental) that interferes with a person's everyday life, including employment.
 - 3) **What does impediment to employment mean?** An impediment to employment means that the disability is severe enough to interfere with a person's ability to do the work that they are normally used to.
 - 4) **How is a medical condition that is an impediment to employment proven?** Usually, after seeing a doctor, the doctor states what type of work the person is limited to. If your doctor supports your claim that you are unable to perform your normal work duties anymore, then you should request your doctor to write a letter to substantiate your claim. (Note: this information is not required, but it will speed things up. If you feel more comfortable having the program collect this information, then that is OK, too).
 - 5) **So to qualify for services, I must have a disability and the disability must be an impediment to employment? Yes**
 - 6) **Can you give me some examples?** *A) A fisherman injures his back while at work. He goes to see his doctor who tells him he should not do this type of work anymore because of the risk of further injury to his back. The fisherman only knows fishing as a profession. The fisherman should apply for services. We can provide services that will assist him in learning a new profession. B) A housekeeper is unable to perform her duties anymore. She injured her back and now has a hard time bending over or doing physical work. This is the only profession she knows. We can provide services that will assist her in learning a new profession. Although these two people needed training, training is not*
- always necessary. A person's work history is reviewed to identify any transferable skills that may exist. If the person has a work history, then we will review those past positions to see if we can assist in finding the person work in similar areas of employment. This is usually the first step in providing services. (Note: In cases of Learning Disabled, documentation usually exists stating the special education classes taken and any mental disabilities normally associated with the disorder). With the above examples in mind, please remember, if you think you have a disability but are not sure if it is an impediment to employment, contact our office and let us determine if you should apply.
- 7) **It has been determined that I should apply for services. Now what?** Next, we explain to you the application process and what you can expect from our program.
 - 8) **Can you describe some of the services?** Once you apply for services we have a period of 60 days to determine whether you are eligible or not. If you are determined eligible, then a plan to achieve employment will be developed by you and the counselor.
 - 9) **What are some of the services provided during this part of the program?** If you do not have transferable skills, and do not have any other experience, then a Vocational Evaluation will be conducted. This is done through a series of tests taken at the Juneau Office of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. If you do not live in Juneau, then arrangements will be made to fly you from your community to do the evaluation. The evaluation takes approximately 4-5 days.
 - 10) **What is the purpose of a Vocational Evaluation?** The Vocational Evaluation is a series of tests to determine your strengths, abilities, and interests related to employment. An interest inventory is used to determine what type of training you are interested in and whether or not you have the capacity to do this type of work/training. Please do not let the word tests scare you. These are not pass/fail types of tests.
 - 11) **OK. I'm done with the evaluation. Now what?** With this information, you and your counselor will decide on the type of plan to develop. As previously stated, transferable skills will be reviewed first. Transferable skills are those skills you acquired from previous employment that may help you on a new job site.