

Case Services Guidance		
<b>Manual:</b> RSB Policy & Procedures	<b>Document Number:</b> 003	<b>Section:</b> IVRS Overview
<b>IMPACT Review:</b> 4/02/2025	<b>SRC Review:</b> 4/22/2025	<b>Finalized Date:</b> 5/6/25

## INTRODUCTION

This manual provides guidance to IVRS in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to job candidates. In no way should the guidance provided be construed as covering all situations and solutions for every issue that develops in the course of rehabilitation service delivery. Much discretion is given to rehabilitation counselors in decision-making as they develop and carry out individualized programs with job candidates. Staff, with assistance from their supervisor and other agency resources, use professional judgment in making decisions on areas not covered in policy.

## DEFINITION

Casework includes the provision of all services consistent with agency expectations from referral to closure; including intake, eligibility, plan development, arranging and providing services and appropriately recording provision of those services. The casework reflects the engagement of job candidates in IVRS services.

Casework is any action, interaction, activity, service, or coordination of service in which a job candidate is the primary reason for the interaction.

## CASE WORK GUIDANCE

Interactions with job candidates are conducted in a manner conducive to the job candidate's primary learning and communication methodology in order to promote understanding and facilitate involvement in an informed person-centered rehabilitation plan. The interactions should be respectful and engaging, promoting the well-being of the job candidate and the transition into employment. The entire focus and purpose for services is to assist the job candidate in preparing for, obtaining, maintaining, regaining, or advancing in employment. Casework includes the provision of all services, consistent with agency expectations, from application to closure and is documented by appropriately recording the provision of those services.

Recording the provision of services is handled by entering a case note immediately following a job candidate appointment whenever feasible, and not later than within five working days of the appointment or discussion with the job candidate, provider, or guardian. Best practice would be to complete case entries immediately following the appointment as this ensures accuracy. IRSS should be updated, as appropriate, within the same timeframe. Case notes are to be updated with factual information.

Components for case notes include:

- Purpose (or Issues);
- Decisions; and
- Next Steps

Case notes should also include a recording of services provided to the job candidate. Comparable service and benefit providers are documented in the case record at the time the job candidate receives a

vocational rehabilitation service from these entities. A case note can be a summary of attempted contacts, or several contacts with multiple people concerning the same issue in the case.

Case notes should not include copies of emails containing legal advice from either the IVRS Staff Attorney or an Assistant Attorney General with the Iowa Attorney General's Office. When it is necessary to indicate in the case notes that legal advice was sought or that the Staff Attorney or Assistant Attorney General advised on a case, the IVRS staff creating the case note must put into their own words what the attorney said. It is a breach of confidentiality if the actual attorney email or letter is disclosed to a third party. To avoid a potential breach of confidentiality, the case note writer must use their own words to summarize or describe the advice from the attorney.

Email communication should be saved as a PDF and attached to a case note. The body of the case note should be utilized to summarize and identify next steps for service delivery.

### **FREQUENCY OF CONTACT**

Casework guidelines require that job candidates are seen as often as necessary to keep the case moving forward to achieve success. The frequency of contact should be discussed with the job candidate so that both the staff and the job candidate have a mutual understanding of expectations regarding the contact so it meets the needs of the job candidate.

The frequency of contact should make sense for the case and the next steps should be clearly stated in the case notes to assure the reader of the case note understands what all involved parties need to do, and timeframes, to assure things continue to move forward for the job candidate. Case work should reflect a sense of urgency in addressing the employment goals applicable to the needs, interests, and abilities of each individual job candidate.

### **CONFIDENTIAL CASES**

There are times when it is necessary for IVRS to protect the confidentiality of a job candidate beyond the scope afforded to all agency clientele—particularly when the job candidate is an employee of IVRS or has a family member who is an employee of IVRS. The direct supervisor should be notified immediately when a family member applies for services. In these instances, information will be accessible only to those individuals necessary to conduct IVRS business with the job candidate.

#### **Protecting the hard copy case file:**

The hard copy case file is identified as a confidential file by placing ½ sheet of red paper on the top of the case file cover sheet showing that the case is confidential and identifying the name of the individual(s) necessitating the confidentiality. The file is stored in a location where only authorized individuals have access.

#### **Protecting IRSS data:**

The office supervisor will send an email to IRSS Support, notifying them that a confidential case exists. Include the job candidate name, case file number, and an explanation of the need for confidentiality in the email. The supervisor identifies staff members in the area office who need access to the data in IRSS. If the staff member from whom access is denied is on the IRSS default list, the supervisor should indicate this in the email as well. This includes Secretary 2's, supervisors, resource team members, executive team members, and financial staff.

**Transferring confidential files:**

When it is necessary to transfer a case that has been identified as confidential to another office, the office supervisor notifies the supervisor of the receiving office that the file will be transferred and the nature of its confidentiality. The receiving supervisor identifies staff members in the new area office who need access to the case in IRSS. Mailing instructions should be provided to assure that the confidential file is not seen by unauthorized personnel.

**Closing confidential files:**

Write the word "CONFIDENTIAL" across the front of the case file to alert Closed Records staff. Before sending the confidential file to Des Moines, clerical staff contacts their office supervisor to determine whether the file can process through the normal case closure personnel or if another process needs to be identified based on staff members who should not see the file due to its confidentiality.

**Reopening confidential files:**

When an IRSS search for a Social Security number or name returns a confidential case, the area office supervisor is notified to determine whether the case is a match to the applicant. If the supervisor determines that a match exists, complete the steps outlined above to provide access to staff who have a work-related need.

<b>CLOSED FILES</b>
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It is not unusual for an individual to have an open case file on multiple occasions. Collecting and recording the same information multiple times is not a good use of the time of the job candidate or IVRS staff.

IVRS staff may be able to review the Health Assessment Questionnaire, intake summary and application with the individual to determine if updates or new data needs to be obtained. In many cases the intake summary and Health Assessment Questionnaire, with updates, can be placed directly into the new case file without recreating them. Old medical, psychological, school, and other records determined to still be relevant by the counselor are brought forward by downloading the documents and uploading them to a case note in the new case record.

<b>CASE TRANSFERS</b>
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Transfer Summary: The IVRS staff will briefly summarize the current case situation stating why the case is being transferred and what the next actions are expected to be, including the current disability issues, any program issues, and financial issues. If the transfer is due to a job candidate's change of residence, the new address and phone number should be updated in IRSS along with the names and telephone numbers of relevant contacts. Case records should not be transferred without information on how to contact the job candidate by the receiving office. The [Case Transfer Check Sheet](#) should be utilized as a tool when transferring open files. The [PE Case Transfer Check Sheet](#) is utilized when transferring a potentially eligible student. Under no circumstances should a case be returned to the sending office when items on the case transfer check sheet have not been completed. Instead, the two office supervisors should discuss any items that are missing to assure a smooth transfer. This process should not delay service provision.

Staff will communicate with the receiving office to provide a warm handoff when requested by the job candidate. A letter may also be sent to the job candidate informing them of the location and contact information for the new office.

Once a transfer is received, a case note entry should include the date of the reassignment as well as the IVRS staff the case is assigned to. Files being transferred to another office should be sent via UPS/FedEx or other mail service that allows for tracking of the package.

If a job candidate requests a change of counselor, the request should be directed to the office supervisor for review. Supervisors may grant requests as appropriate. However, efforts should be made to minimize case transfers to the extent possible. Historically, case transfers cause interruptions with the flow of services and loss of connection with the job candidate and support system. Transfers should occur when it is designed to better meet the needs of the job candidate. This guidance is not meant to imply that cases should not be transferred when the job candidate has moved to a location covered by another office or to a post-secondary setting where their needs can be better met through on-site provision of services. In these circumstances, it is appropriate to transfer the case file.

#### **SHARED CASES**

Vocational rehabilitation agencies in different states may collaborate to provide services in their respective geographic areas to an individual with a disability. A case may be served by two state vocational rehabilitation agencies as long as it meets the disability and employment-related needs of the individual, there is an agreement regarding the services provided to assure there is no duplication of services, and both agencies receive copies of the IPE and authorizations. The office supervisor can apprise an RSB Bureau Chief of the situation as needed.

The [Memorandum of Agreement \(MoA\)](#) between the Iowa Department of the Blind (IDB) and IVRS should be utilized whenever a case is shared between these two entities. Cases may be shared by both agencies for jointly operated/provided programs such as Iowa Self-Employment (ISE) and Transition Alliance Program (TAP), in accordance with the MoA.

Regardless of the type of shared case, original case files are never sent outside the IVRS agency. Collaboration is key in all shared cases and this can be accomplished either in person or through various technologies. Refer to the appropriate MoA for further information regarding the process of sharing cases, including case file materials.

#### **CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

At application, closure, and at significant decision-making points while the file is open, the job candidate should be provided with the right to contact and possibly receive assistance from the [Client Assistance Program \(CAP\)](#). The job candidate should also be informed that CAP is located at Iowa Health and Human Services, Early Intervention and Support, Division of Family Wellbeing and Protection, Lucas State Office Building, 321 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, IA 50319. Telephone contact can be made toll free by calling 1-800-652-4298. More information about CAP can be found in the [CAP](#) policy.

#### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL**

The IMPACT team and Bureau Leadership Team (BLT) develop and approve policy. The BLT seeks input from their office staff and brings information to IMPACT meetings. Staff are encouraged to ask questions, seek guidance, and suggest improvements to policy through their BLT member. Suggestions can also be directed to, and discussed with, any member of IMPACT. Staff are encouraged to put questions and recommendations in writing through the use of the [IVRS Policy Change Request Form](#) so that clear understanding of the concept is presented and discussed in order for a decision to be made regarding the policy in question.

If staff receive suggestions from job candidates, partners, or others outside the agency the information should be drafted in writing and submitted to the IMPACT team through the [IVRS Policy Change Request Form](#). Any staff person may request that an item be placed on the IMPACT agenda. They also may request an opportunity to meet with the IMPACT team to discuss an issue. An attempt will be made to respond to all suggestions and questions.

Policy revisions are then presented to the [State Rehabilitation Council \(SRC\)](#) for feedback prior to training and implementation.

#### **CORRECTING DATES OF CASE ACTIONS**

There are times when information entered into IRSS needs to be backdated to match the date(s) on forms contained in the official case record. Generally, case events may be backdated within the same program year (July 1 to June 30). No case event can be backdated prior to the last case event listed on the case history page in IRSS including status changes, form entry, and case transfers. The following actions require supervisory approval:

- Files closed in Status 08-0, 26-0, 28-0, 30-0, or 38-0 require review and approval by the supervisor to remove the closure. Cases closed in a previously reported quarter cannot be removed unless it is the result of an appeal decision. If a job candidate is appealing a decision to close a case, the case should be left in an interrupted status until the appeal has been resolved.
- If it is discovered that there is a duplicate case and/or Potentially Eligible record for the same job candidate, IVRS staff should contact IRSS Support to determine which case or record should be retained. When possible, IRSS Support will assist with combining duplicate cases and/or records and delete the unnecessary case and/or record.
- When an error is discovered in IRSS, the error is analyzed to determine whether correcting the error improves the accuracy of data required for federal reporting or is needed to improve service delivery for the job candidate. Examples of items that will be corrected include an inaccurate date of birth or Social Security number, a date of application that has not been reported to RSA or an approved form that was entered on the wrong case record. Examples of items that will not be corrected include a status change from 10-0 to 10-1 resulting from the expected graduation date not being entered in IRSS or a change in the case owner of a closed case.

#### **EXCEPTIONS**

IVRS has a method of allowing for exceptions for all guidance and standards, unless the exception would violate State or Federal laws.

Because these items are a part of the federal law an exception cannot be granted for:

- Eligibility requirements (disability, substantial impediment to employment, requiring VR services);
- Required content of the IPE;
- Identification of extended services in supported employment cases;
- Paying for extended services beyond the Federal limits;
- Being in employment and in status 22-0 for at least 90 calendar days prior to status 26-0 closure;
- Status progression, restrictions, and timeframes, such as eligibility in 60 calendar days or a signed extension;
- Status 26-0 being in competitive integrated employment;
- SSDI/SSI recipients being automatically eligible;
- Providing intensive services while an individual is on the waiting list, other than those allowed for Potentially Eligible;
- Establishing a durational residency requirement before services can be provided;
- Setting an arbitrary limit on the amount of money that can be spent on a job candidate;
- Setting an arbitrary limit on the length of time an individual can be a job candidate; or
- Providing services beyond what is required for job retention when the job candidate was moved into service, bypassing waiting list placement, in order to save the job; or not returning the individual to the waiting list when in a category not being served when further services are requested.

#### EXCEPTION PROCESS

Any time a job candidate is dissatisfied with an agency policy, they should be informed that they can request an exception to policy. Any IVRS staff may complete the [Request for Exception to Policy form](#), however, a counselor must sign the document to indicate their support of the exception. IVRS staff should explain to the job candidate in advance that a request for an exception is no guarantee that it will be approved. When a job candidate requests an exception and the counselor supports the request, the form is completed. The form is then submitted to the area office supervisor who will review it, and then sent to the RSB Bureau Chief, who will determine whether the exception is approved or denied. Exceptions may only be approved by an RSB Bureau Chief or higher level of authority, as outlined in the relevant policy. If the exception is denied at any time in the process, the job candidate must be informed of their right to the appeal and mediation process.

#### GENERAL STANDARDS AND PROVISIONS RELATING TO SERVICES

- **Age:** No upper age limit will be established which will result in a finding of ineligibility for any individual who otherwise meets the basic eligibility requirements. The lower age limit is 14 years of age established by the Iowa Department of Education for transition. Age must follow the work rules in the State of Iowa.
- **Citizenship:** Individuals who present proper credentials permitting work will not be excluded so long as they will be available to complete a rehabilitation program, including employment in a suitable occupation, and are legally able to work in the United States.
- **Civil Rights:** Eligibility requirements will be determined without regard to gender, race, age, creed, color, type of disability, sexual orientation, or national origin.
- **Disability:** No group of individuals will be excluded or found ineligible solely on the basis of type of disability. Individuals who are legally blind or have a visual impairment as outlined in the [Memorandum of Agreement](#) will be referred to IDB for services.

- **Economic Need:** The economic circumstances of an individual is not a factor in determining eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services. Refer to the [Financial Inventory \(R-406\) policy](#) for more information.
- **Native Americans:** Vocational rehabilitation services are provided to Native Americans with a disability residing in the State to the same extent that those services are provided to anyone else.
- **Residence:** No durational residence requirement will be imposed on any individual who is present in the State and available for services.
- **Responsibility:** All decisions affecting the nature and scope of IVRS services and the provision of those services are made by members of IVRS staff in consultation with the job candidate. This responsibility will not be delegated to any other agency or individual.

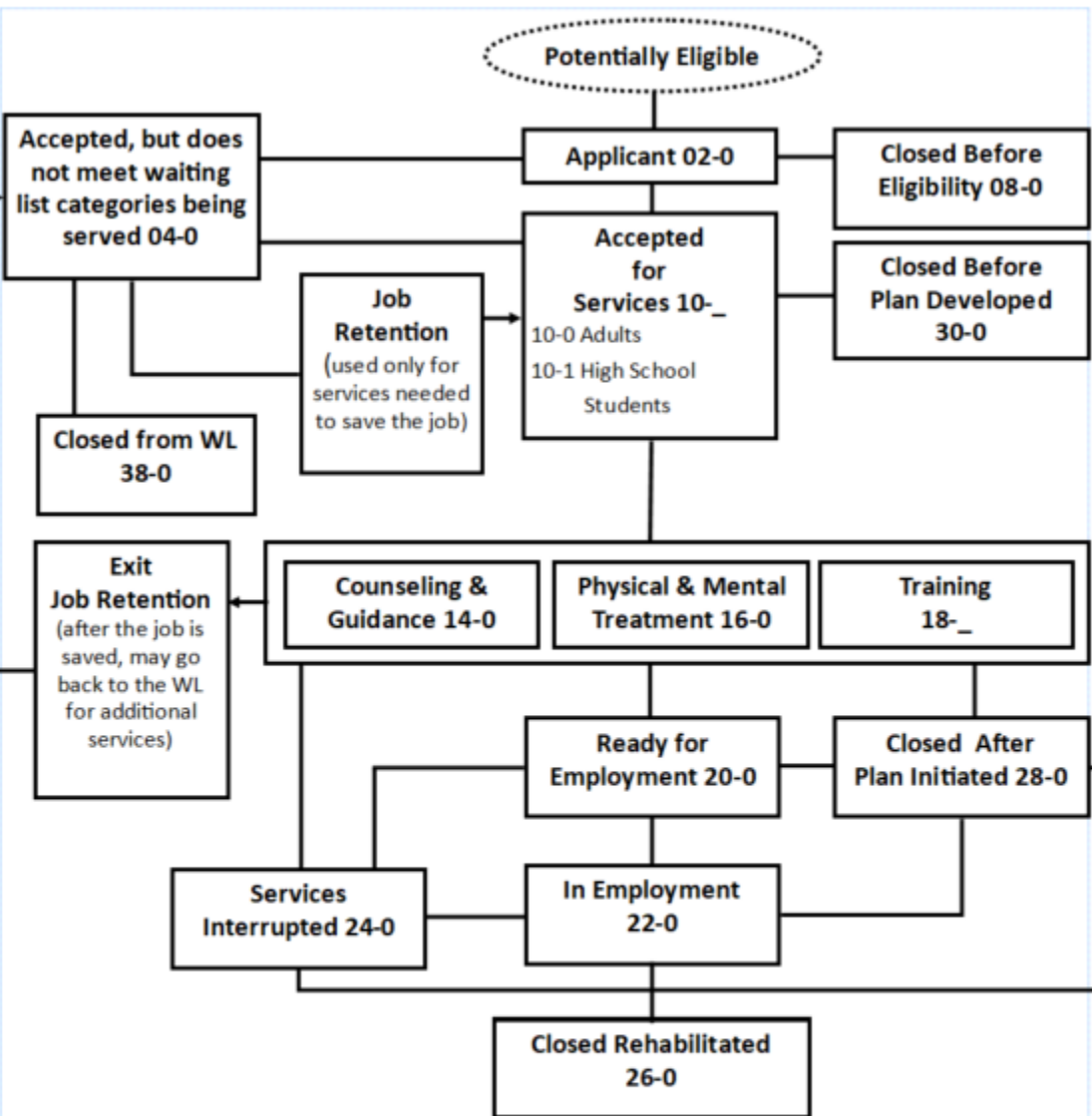
<b>CASE STATUSES</b>
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Status	Description
00-0	Referral – Individuals who are referred to IVRS for services are placed in referral status while staff connect with the individual to complete a Pre-ETS Agreement or conduct an intake interview. Cases remain in referral status until they are moved to status 01-0 or 02-0.
01-0	Potentially Eligible – when a Pre-ETS Agreement has been completed, the case moves to status 01-0. Potentially eligible students in this status receive Pre-Employment Transition Services.
01-1	Closed from Potentially Eligible – cases closed from status 01-0.
02-0	Applicant – a case is in application status from the time it is opened until an eligibility is entered in IRSS (including presumptive eligibility) or the case is moved for trial work. Cases in this status are monitored to assure an eligibility decision is completed within 60 days.
04-0	Accepted, but does not meet waiting list categories being served – a case moves to this status when presumptive eligibility is entered or when an eligibility form is entered with the selection of a waiting list category not being served. Only Pre-Employment Transition Services (for the appropriate demographic) and Information and Referral services can be delivered to job candidates on the waiting list.
08-0	Closed before Eligibility – cases closed from Status 02-0.
10-X	Accepted for Service – cases for adult job candidates move to Status 10-0 and cases for job candidates in high school move to Status 10-1. Movement is determined by the waiting list categories being served and by the high school graduation date entered in IRSS. Cases in this status are monitored to assure a plan for employment is developed within 90 days.
14-0	Guidance & Counseling – cases are manually moved to this service status when the major service provided is vocational guidance and counseling. Cases in this status are assigned to a vocational counselor.
16-0	Physical and Mental Restoration – cases are manually moved to this service status when the major service provided is physical or mental treatment.
18-X	Training Statuses – the VR program allows for several different types of training. In order to further define the different types of training, this section contains multiple statuses. Cases are manually moved to these service statuses when the major service provided is a training program fitting the status description.

- 18-1 Work Adjustment Training/Assessment
- 18-2 On the Job Training (Employee and Trainee)
- 18-3 Occupational or Vocational Training/Apprenticeship Training
- 18-4 Junior or Community College/4-Year University/Graduate College Training
- 18-5 Secondary Education Training
- 18-6 Supported Employment or Customized Employment
- 18-7 Other Types of Training Not Covered Above (including non-supported employment job coaching and self-employment)
- 20-0 Ready for Employment – cases are manually moved to this status when the job candidate is ready to seek employment. An IPE-2 form with an effective date in the last 30 days is required to move a case to this status.
- 22-0 In Employment – cases are manually moved to this status when the job candidate is placed in employment. An IPE-2 form with an effective date in the last 30 days is required to move a case to this status. Cases in this status are monitored for a minimum of 90 days to assure stabilization has occurred.
- 24-0 Service Interrupted – cases are manually moved to this status when it is necessary to interrupt the plan for employment. An IPE-2 form with an effective date in the last 30 days is required to move a case to this status.
- 26-0 Closed Rehabilitated – includes cases closed after 90-days of stabilization in Status 22-0. IRSS automatically assigns this status when a closure form is saved and approved if the criteria has been met.
- 28-0 Closed After Plan Initiated – includes cases closed from Statuses 14-0, 16-0, 18-X, 20-0, 22-0 when 90 days of stabilization has not occurred, and 24-0. IRSS automatically assigns this status when a closure form is saved and approved if the criteria has been met.
- 30-0 Closed Before Plan is Initiated – includes cases closed from Statuses 10-0 and 10-1.
- 38-0 Closed from the Waiting List – includes cases closed from Status 04-0.



## CASE SERVICES FLOW CHART



**Status 18 Training Categories:**

- 18-1 Work Adjustment Training/Assessment
- 18-2 On-the-Job Training
- 18-3 Vocational/Technical
- 18-4 Academic
- 18-5 Secondary Education
- 18-6 Supported Employment Job Coaching
- 18-7 Other Trainings (i.e. non-supported job coaching, ISE, etc.)