

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES ▼  
HUMAN RESOURCES ENTERPRISE

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**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SPECIALIST**

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**DEFINITION**

Under general supervision, provides professional treatment services to mentally and/or physically handicapped clients with the general long-term goal of employment and/or social adjustment; performs related work as required.

**The Work Examples and Competencies listed are for illustrative purposes only and not intended to be the primary basis for position classification decisions.**

**WORK EXAMPLES**

Assists a supervisor by performing, in accordance with set procedures, policies and standards, such duties as instructing employees about tasks, answering questions about procedures and policies, distributing and balancing the workload and checking work; may make occasional suggestions on appointments, promotions, and reassignments.

Gathers information about clients in order to determine individual interests, strengths and weaknesses for vocational case planning, by interviewing clients, reading case records, consulting other staff, and/or administering interest, aptitude, dexterity or achievement tests to clients.

Writes individual vocational case plans for clients in order to insure that their vocational needs are met by setting vocational objectives, establishing target dates for reaching objectives, and determining what services should be provided to the clients to meet those objectives.

Places clients in work situations within the institution in order to enable them to learn a vocation by working alongside and under the direction of institutional employees by introducing clients to work area supervisors, explaining to the clients the work and behavior required, and informing work area supervisors of special needs and problems of clients that might affect their work.

Designs work tasks for lower functioning clients in order to provide activity and prepare clients for more advanced vocational training by getting ideas from the literature of the profession and visiting other mental retardation facilities, drawing up plans, getting approval for their use from the supervisor, gathering materials needed, and building items used in the new work tasks.

Directs a training unit where basic work skills (such as using a time clock, color and shape discrimination and following directions) are taught by Vocational Rehabilitation Assistants in order to prepare clients for new work tasks, evaluates effectiveness of unit, makes changes as needed, and handles client discipline problems referred by subordinates.

Instructs clients in acceptable social, work, and interpersonal behaviors in order to facilitate clients' ability to be successful in a work environment by encouraging, appropriate behavior, and giving negative reinforcement for inappropriate behavior.

Maintains discipline among clients in order to keep disruptive behavior from interfering with the clients' learning by applying principles of behavior modification and client management and by following the institution's established discipline procedures.

Evaluates clients' progress in order to determine their rate of pay if assigned to a work area and to assess the effectiveness of the clients' vocational programming by observing them in their work, discussing their work skills with their instructors or work area supervisors, and/or talking with the clients about their work.

Writes progress notes, periodic reviews of individual cases, and other reports in approved formats in order to provide the necessary information to others involved in the cases.

Attends meetings as a member of an interdisciplinary treatment team in order to coordinate therapy efforts with other staff by providing other members with information concerning the vocational aspect of client cases and making decisions on the treatment plan of specific clients.

Develops new work areas within the institution where clients can learn skills on the job to enhance their employability at discharge by identifying jobs that clients can perform and soliciting cooperation from potential work area supervisors.

Verifies suitability of community-based facilities for clients approaching discharge in order to recommend to Social Workers placement of discharged clients by visiting facilities and comparing facilities' programs and environment with clients' needs.

### **COMPETENCIES REQUIRED**

Knowledge of acceptable social, work and interpersonal behavior.

Knowledge of the effects of physical disabilities on the vocational development and functioning level of clients.

Knowledge of the principles of positive and negative reinforcement used to modify behavior.

Knowledge of the basic principles and theories of psychology.

Knowledge of the effects of mental illness on the vocational development and functioning level of clients.

Knowledge of the effects of an intellectual disability on the vocational development and functioning level of clients.

Knowledge of the theories, principles and techniques of vocational rehabilitation.

Knowledge of counseling theories and techniques useful in facilitating the rehabilitation of disabled clients.

Ability to read and write English at the level necessary for completing the required case records.

Ability to communicate with low-functioning clients in a manner that they can understand.

Ability to interact with staff in a manner that establishes and maintains effective work relationships.

Ability to interact with clients to gain and maintain their confidence.

Ability to apply positive and negative reinforcement to modify unacceptable behavior.

Ability to empathize with disabled clients.

Ability to perform simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Ability to evaluate level of disabled clients' vocational functioning using information from client interviews, case records, and input from other staff.

Ability to determine the skills required to perform a variety of jobs.

Ability to evaluate progress of clients toward their vocational goals.

Ability to plan, organize, and control the work of subordinates.

Displays high standards of ethical conduct. Refrains from dishonest behavior.

Works and communicates with all clients and customers providing professional service.

Displays a high level of initiative, effort, attention to detail and commitment by completing assignments efficiently with minimal supervision.

Follows policy and cooperates with supervisors.

Fosters and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity and team spirit throughout the organization.

Exchanges information with individuals or groups effectively by listening and responding appropriately.

**EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

Four years (120 semester hours or equivalent academic units) of post high school education with an emphasis in human service-oriented sciences such as child development, community or family services, counseling, education, occupational or physical therapy, psychology, social work, sociology, therapeutic recreation, vocational rehabilitation/counseling or other closely related areas;

OR

the equivalent of four years of full-time work experience in vocational training, counseling, or evaluation of mentally and/or physically handicapped clients at the level of a Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant or higher;

OR

any equivalent combination of the above qualifying experience substituting for the required education (on the basis that one year of experience equals 30 semester hours of education) shall be considered a qualifying.

Effective Date: 03/12 BR