



Bureau of Rehabilitation Services is  
Connecticut's Vocational  
Rehabilitation (VR) Program

Operated out of the Department of  
Aging and Disability Services (ADS)



Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

# The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)



- WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peysner Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- The purpose of WIOA is to align employment, education, and training programs to strengthen the United States labor market.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a core program of the workforce system which is made up of a network of federal, state, and local government-funded agencies and a proud partner of the American Job Center.

## Purpose of Vocational Rehabilitation

The purpose of the VR Program is, in part, “to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society”

- Ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the support they need to acquire the skills necessary to obtain, maintain, and advance in competitive integrated employment
- Ensuring that employers receive the necessary training and technical assistance needed to better understand and receive the talent potential individuals with disabilities can bring to the workforce.



# What is a Disability?

- The ADA defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability. The ADA also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on that person's association with a person with a disability.
- It is important to remember that in the context of the ADA, “disability” is a legal term rather than a medical one. Because it has a legal definition, the ADA's definition of disability is different from how disability is defined under some other laws, such as for Social Security Disability related benefits.



# Disability Continued

- There are more than 56 million people in the US - or nearly 1 in of 5 – who self identify as people with disabilities. And most have disabilities such as diabetes, cancer, a learning disability, or mental health condition that are non apparent to the rest of us.
- Disability cuts across class, gender, race, ethnicity, but being disabled disproportionately affects those living in poverty, women, Black and non-Black people of color.
- It is important to note from the outset that there is ability beyond disability. Disabilities, impairments, and chronic health conditions are a natural part of being human. We may be born with them or cycle in and out of disabilities through injury and recovery.



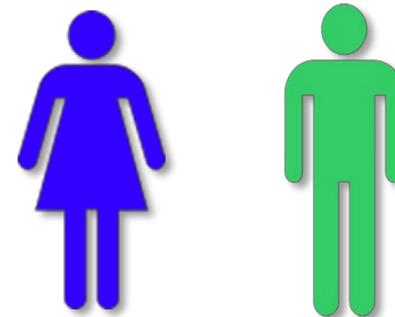
# Hidden or Invisible Disabilities

- ADHD
- Anxiety disorders
- Asthma
- Learning disabilities
- TBI
- Epilepsy
- Diabetes
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Chronic Pain
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing

**Some disabilities look like this**



**Some look like this**





# Adult Services May Include:

- Vocational Counseling
- Evaluations to explore job interests, skills, and capabilities
- Assistance with understanding Labor Market Information and Career Pathways
- Job Search Assistance
- Assistance with training or education, if needed to obtain a job
- On the Job Training
- Vehicle and Home Modifications
- Special equipment or technology to address disability-related barriers
- Supported Employment Services
- Benefits Counseling
- Help accessing other programs and services



# Level Up Services

Transition services are provided to “Students with Disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR Services”

- Job Exploration Counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in Postsecondary educational programs
- Workplace Readiness training
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy



# Business Services

- Talent Recruitment
- Diversity and Inclusion Assistance
- Employee Retention
- Training for Business (Understanding ADA, Accommodations, Assistive Technology)
- Tax Credit and Incentive Assistance



# Eligibility Overview for VR Services

## Adult VR Services

- Significant physical or mental condition
- Disability poses substantial barrier to employment
- Must require services to prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment

## Level Up Program

- Enrolled students who are 16-22yrs old
- Eligible for special education or related services
- An individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504



# How do I refer someone?

When we ask how you heard about us or who referred you, we often hear- a family member, friend, counselor, doctor, teacher or involvement through another agency or workforce system.

- You can share information, our website or a flyer with someone you know that might benefit from services and encourage them to reach out.
- You can assist that individual with taking the first step, by making the initial phone call with them, or by attending meetings with them if they would like.
- Contact a local BRS office to schedule an appointment with one of our counselors.



# Additional Resources

## Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

- Employer's Guide to Reasonable Accommodation
- Workplace Accommodation Toolkit
- A to Z of Disabilities and Accommodations
- <https://askjan.org/>





# Additional Resources

## The Connecticut Tech Act Project (CTTAP)

Operates out of ADS | BRS. Our goal is to help individuals with disabilities of all ages and all disabilities, as well as family members, employers, educators and other professionals have access to Assistive Technology devices and services.

- AT Demonstration Centers
- AT Lending
- AT Recycling
- AT Financial Loan
- Training & Technical Assistance





# Additional Resources

- [EEOC](#)
- [ADA National Network](#)
- [Employer Assistance Resource Network](#)
- [New England ADA](#)
- [Disability:IN](#)
- [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)



**Thank you!**



**BRS**

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