



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Applying for ACCES-VR

ACCES-VR is a New York State agency that helps people with disabilities explore their job interests, find a job, and keep it. ACCES-VR (which used to be called VESID) stands for “Adult Career and Continuing Education Services — Vocational Rehabilitation.” If you have a disability and are looking for work, ACCES-VR may be able to help!

How can ACCES-VR help me?

ACCES-VR offers many services to help people get and keep a job, such as:

- Career counseling and guidance
- Job training at a vocational school, college, or on the job*
- Job coaching (sometimes called “supported employment”)
- Help with transportation costs
- Help with school costs, like tuition, fees, or books
- Funding for college supports, like note-takers or tutors
- Tests to identify your skills, interests, and challenges (these could include vocational, psychological, or assistive technology evaluations)
- Public benefits advice
- Technology and equipment you may need to work, like hearing aids or voice-to-text software*
- Other services based on your goals and financial need

* Family income is considered to qualify for these services.

Who is eligible for ACCES-VR?

If you have a disability and need help getting or keeping a job, you may be eligible. If you had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan in school, you should apply for ACCES-VR. The amount of money you have may be considered for eligibility. ACCES-VR is available to U.S. citizens and to non-citizens with papers that allow them to work in the U.S. You must be at least 14 years old to get ACCES-VR services. There is no upper age limit for ACCES-VR, so even if you left high school many years ago or never graduated, you can still apply.

Applying to ACCES-VR through your school

If you apply to ACCES-VR while you're still in high school, you can meet your ACCES-VR counselor at school, along with your parent or guardian and your school's "transition services" person (often your guidance counselor). Every high school has an ACCES-VR counselor who can work with you and help with your application.

After you graduate from high school, if you have been working with an ACCES-VR counselor, you can stay assigned to that person.

How do I apply?

→ STEP 1: Get an application.

Your guidance counselor or Special Education teacher may talk to you and your family about Acces-VR and provide the application if you would like to apply.

or

You can find the application online at: acces.nysed.gov/vr/apply-vocational-rehabilitation-services.
The application is available in several languages.

or

You can also get an application at an orientation session. You don't have to go to an orientation, but you may find it helpful. To sign up, call the Buffalo ACCES-VR office (see last page of this fact sheet). Orientations are usually held at least once a month.

→ STEP 2: Complete and turn in your application.

The school will provide the needed documentation and your application to the assigned School Liaison for ACCES-VR to process the application.

or

To apply, print and send your application to your local ACCES-VR office. You can drop your application off in person or send it by fax or mail. You don't need to attach any extra paperwork to your application.

NOTE: The best way to turn in your application is in person. This way you can get the name of the ACCES-VR staff member who received your application. If you choose to fax it, make sure you call the office first, since some offices do not accept applications by fax.

or

If you attend an orientation the facilitator will send your application to the Buffalo ACCES-VR office to be processed.

→ STEP 3: Go to an interview with an ACCES-VR counselor.

Two or three weeks after you turn in your application, you will get a letter with the date and time of your first interview with an ACCES-VR counselor. The letter will also tell you what documents to bring to your interview. You may need to bring:

- Identification (anything with your picture on it; a school ID would be fine)
- Birth certificate
- Social Security card
- Diploma (if you have one)
- School transcript
- IEP or 504 Plan
- Evaluations
- Half-fare MetroCard (if you have one)

When you go to ACCES-VR for your interview, be prepared to talk about what type of work you would like to do and the training or help you think you need. Your counselor may send you to get vocational testing, paid for by ACCES-VR. This testing may take five or more days, but is very important to the process. It helps you and your counselor figure out what your skills, interests, and challenges are so that ACCES-VR can create an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that has all of the right supports for you.

NOTE: If you miss your appointment, it may be difficult to reschedule. Let your counselor know ahead of time if you are unable to make an appointment.

SUCCESS STORIES

When Thomas finished high school, he wasn't sure what he wanted to do. He applied to lots of jobs in his neighborhood but didn't have any luck. Thomas then went to ACCES-VR and enrolled in a maintenance program. In one year, he had his certificate and a job at JFK airport.

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Christina always wanted to be a chef in a restaurant. When she was still in high school, her guidance counselor helped her apply to ACCES-VR. Once Christina graduated, she started culinary school right away, and ACCES-VR helped to pay for her tuition.

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Billy got accepted to college, but did not know how he would pay for some of the things that he would need. Through ACCES-VR he was able to get a free computer and printer, funding for tuition, books and room & board.

What if I disagree with my ACCES-VR Counselor?

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) helps New Yorkers who have questions or problems getting ACCES-VR services. They can help you figure out what to do if you don't agree with a decision made by ACCES-VR and possibly appeal that decision.

You can reach them at:

Disability Rights New York

25 Chapel Street, Suite 1005 • Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel: 518-432-7861 • TTY: 518-512-3448 • Toll Free: 800-993-8982 • Fax: 518-427-6561

ACCES-VR OFFICES IN BUFFALO

Address	508 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14202
Phone	1-888-652-7062
Fax	716-848-8103
Website	acces.nysed.gov/vr/buffalo-district-office

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