

Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Chapter 31

*Formerly referred to as Vocational
Rehabilitation and Employment*



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

What is Veteran Readiness and Employment (Chapter 31)

Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Service (formerly called Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment and also referred to as Chapter 31) assists eligible Servicemembers and Veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain suitable employment. VR&E provides services that help with job training, employment accommodations, resume development, and job seeking skills coaching. VR&E may also assist Veterans with starting their own businesses or identifying independent living services for those who are severely disabled and unable to work in traditional employment.

<https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/>



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Eligibility for Veteran Readiness and Employment?

Veterans:

- Honorable or other than dishonorable discharge.
- A VA service-connected disability rating of 10 percent or more.

Active Duty Servicemembers:

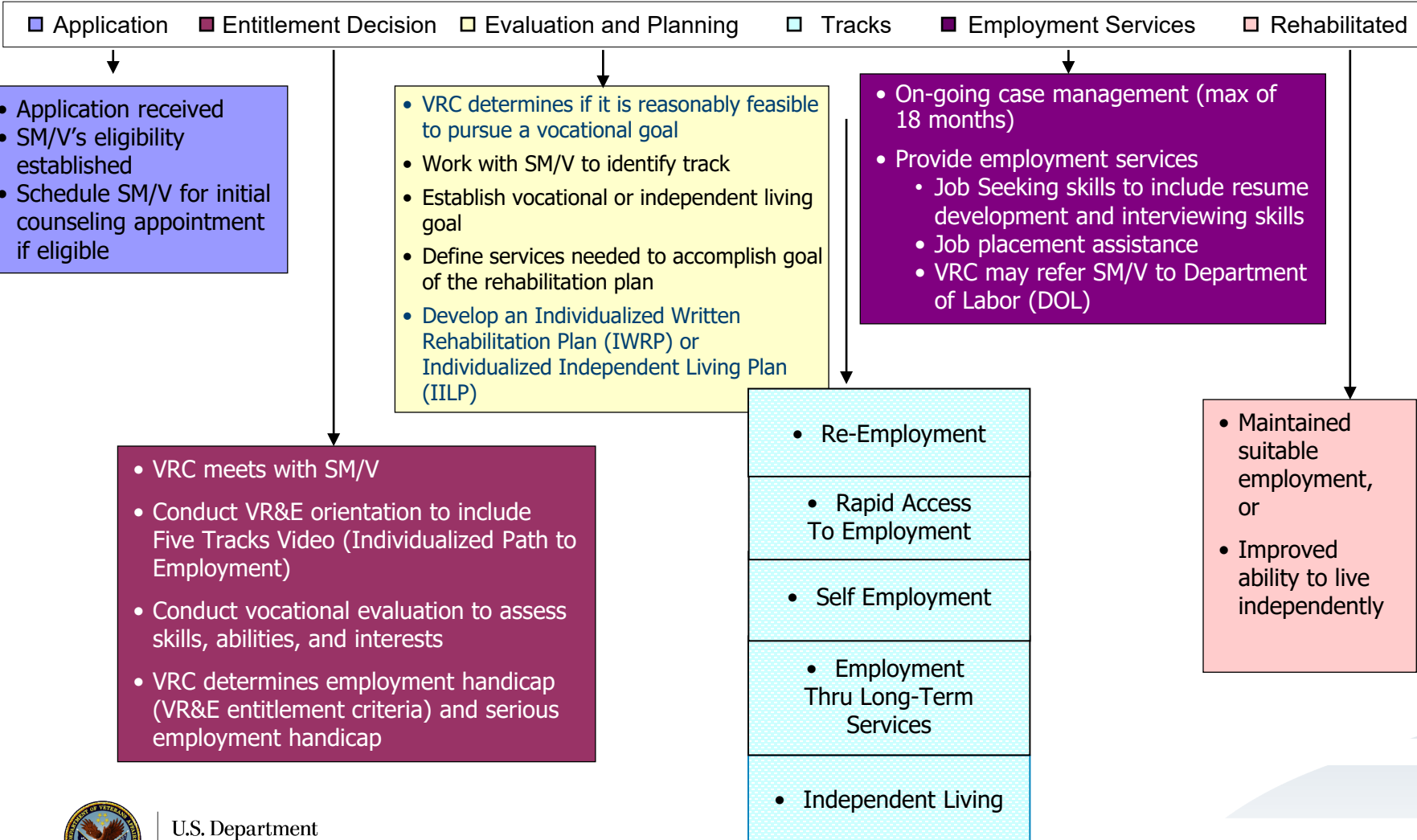
- Expect to receive an honorable or other than dishonorable discharge.
- Obtain a VA memorandum rating of 20 percent or more.
- Enrolled in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES).

- **If Veterans were discharged from active duty before January 1, 2013**, Veteran's basic period of eligibility ends 12 years from one of these dates, whichever comes later: the date in which they were discharged from the service or the effective date of their VA rating.
- **If Veteran was discharged from active duty on or after January 1, 2013**, the 12-year basic period of eligibility doesn't apply. There's no time limit for eligibility. Effective January 5, 2021.
- **Please note:** The basic period of eligibility may be extended if a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) finds that a Veteran/SM has a serious employment handicap (SEH).

What kind of VR&E services can a Veteran receive ?

- **Depending on needs and goals, services may include:**
 - A complete evaluation to determine abilities, skills, and interests for employment
 - Vocational counseling and planning for employment services
 - Employment services such as job training, resume development, and other work-readiness support
 - Help finding and keeping a job, including the use of special employer incentives and job accommodations
 - On-the-job training (OJT), apprenticeships, and non-paid work experiences
 - Post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical, or business school
 - Supportive services including case management, counseling, and medical referrals
 - Independent living services if Veterans are unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities

VR&E Process



VR&E support-and-services tracks

VR&E offers five support-and-services tracks to help Veterans/Service members find and keep a job, and live as independently as possible.

- **Reemployment track**
 - Veterans/Service Members may have the right to return to the civilian job they held before deployed. Find out how VR&E can help with this process.
- **Rapid Access to Employment track**
 - If a Veteran wants a job that matches their existing skills, they may qualify for employment counseling and job-seeking support.
- **Self-Employment track**
 - VR&E may be able to offer self-employment services to help start their own business, if criteria is met.
- **Employment Through Long-Term Services track**
 - Veterans may be eligible for vocational training to help develop new job skills utilizing a school, apprenticeship site, or other approved training facility.
 - Can provide up to 48 months of benefits and match Ch33 (Post 9/11) rate if entitled.
 - Pay for full cost of tuition, fees, and required supplies/books while pursuing training and offer employment services post completion.
- **Independent Living track**
 - Learn about services that can help Veterans live as independently as possible if they are unable to work.

Re-Employment Track

Designed for individuals separating from active duty, National Guard, or Reserves to provide the services necessary for the individual to return to work in the job held prior to entering active duty.

Services may include:

- Consultation with employer
- Job accommodations and modifications
- Coordination with VHA for services
- Reemployment rights advice
- Case management

Rapid Access to Employment Track

Designed for individuals expressing interest in seeking employment soon after separation **and** have the necessary skills to be competitive **in the labor market** in a suitable-occupation.

Services may include:

- Short-term training
- Subsistence allowance
- Individualized employment services
- Job readiness preparation
- Resume development
- Interviewing skills preparation
- Job search assistance
- Referral to Department of Labor (DOL) for employment search assistance
- Post-employment follow-up

Employment Through Long-Term Services Track

Designed for individuals requiring specialized training and/or education to obtain suitable employment.

Services may include:

- Apprenticeships
- Internships
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE)
- College, vocational, or technical training
- Purchase of required tuition/fees/books/supplies
- Subsistence allowance
- Personalized case management support
- Individualized employment services

Employment Through Long-Term Services Track (P9/11 Subsistence Rate)

- If Veteran is eligible for GI Bill benefits, can they get paid the Post-9/11 GI Bill subsistence rate under Ch31 VR&E program?
- Yes, they can choose to get paid the GI Bill (Ch33) subsistence rate instead of the Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rate if qualify for both benefits and both of the following must be true:
 - The Veteran has at least 1 day of entitlement remaining under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, **and**
 - They are within their GI Bill eligibility period.

Note: In most cases, the GI Bill rate is higher.

- Veterans need to officially elect the GI Bill subsistence rate. Their VRE Counselors can help them with this.
 - [Check the current Chapter 31 subsistence allowance rates](#)
 - [Check the current Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit rates](#)

Self-Employment Track

Designed to provide services to SM/V who have the necessary job skills to start a business, have limited access to traditional employment or accommodating work environment due to limitations resulting from a disabling condition.

Services may include:

- Referrals to resources and guidance to assist in development of a business plan
- Analysis of business concept
- Training in small business operations, marketing, and finances
- Guidance in obtaining adequate resources to implement the business plan

Independent Living Track

Designed for SM/V who are **unable** to pursue a vocational goal or seek employment.

Services may include:

- Acquiring assistive technology
- Independent living skills training
- Community-based support services
- Gaining increased access to the community
- Help in acquiring a volunteer position
- Home adaptations to improve independence in activities of daily living

Chapter 36 Services

How VR&E assists SM/V, and eligible Dependents

Educational and Career/Vocational Counseling services is a great opportunity for SM/V to get personalized counseling and support to help guide their career paths, ensure most effective use of their VA benefits, and achieve their goals.

Who May Apply

- Transitioning Servicemembers who are within six months of discharge from active duty and expect to receive a discharge that is other than dishonorable.
- Veterans within one year following discharge from active duty if they have received an honorable or other than dishonorable discharge.
- Any SM/V currently eligible for a VA education benefit.
- All current VA education beneficiaries.

VetSuccess on Campus

How VR&E assists student SM/V, and Dependents

VR&E has VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) Counselors on a number college campuses across the nation (only UWM for Wisconsin currently). The VSOC Counselor provides a multitude of services to ease the transition to **student/civilian** life for the SM/V.

Provide seamless access to VA services to all student SM/V to include:

- Assistance with navigating the academic environment.
- Vocational testing and career and academic counseling.
- Referral services as needed.
- Support eligible participants with successful integration into college and university campuses to include adjustment counseling.
- Provide support to allow the SM/V successful completion of individualized educational goals.
- Improve their life circumstances to successfully live and thrive in the career field and community of their choice.



Additional VR&E Questions/Information



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VRE Benefits and GI Bill

- Is the VR&E program the same as the GI Bill?
 - No. The GI Bill is an education program.
 - The purpose of the VR&E program is to assist SM/Vs with service-connected disabilities to overcome their barriers to employment and become suitably employed.
 - Four of the five VR&E tracks of services are geared specifically toward employment.
 - The “E” in VR&E stands for the program’s mission to assist SM/Vs with obtaining and maintaining suitable Employment.

Differences between Ch33 and Ch31

- VRE is able to pay at the 100% Ch33 BAH rate for a Veteran that is approved for Ch31 services and meets Ch33 criteria, even if the Veteran does not qualify for the 100% rate under VA Education criteria for Ch33.
- VRE pays for all the costs of supplies/books compared to Ch33 issuing a supply stipend each term for Veterans.
- VRE is unable to pay Ch33 kickers to Veterans that switch to Ch31 VRE.
- VRE is unable to utilize yellow ribbon program services, but will pay the full cost of the schooling under VRE for approved school program for the Veteran.
- For a full complete listing of differences between VA education benefits please refer to:
 - <https://www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool/>
- Ch31 is an employment program so if schooling is covered under Ch31 employment services may be offered afterwards in addition to two additional SA payments made (Employment Adjustment Allowances) if applicable.

What is the “48 Month Rule” change for VRE and VA education benefits

- **What is changing?**
 - Previously, VA Education counted VRE usage against GI Bill education benefits when applying the 48- Month Rule. Now, it no longer counts. Time used in Ch33 will still reduce Ch31 VRE time, but time used in Ch31 will not affect Ch33 benefits.
- **Should a Veteran with a service-connected disability using the Post-9/11 GI Bill apply for VR&E benefits if they are about to run out of entitlement?**
 - Yes, Veterans may apply for Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) benefits at any time.
 - The use of entitlement in any VA education program impacts the amount of remaining VR&E entitlement that a Veteran may be eligible to receive.
 - It may be possible for a Veteran to have entitlement previously used in a VA education program reclassified as entitlement used in VR&E, which could possibly result in additional entitlement to other VA education programs; however, this is case specific.

Changes to Graduate Full Time Modifier (FTM) reporting for Non-standard terms

- Effective August 1, 2021, the Long Term Solution (LTS) no longer automatically performs credit hour equivalent calculations for graduate training in **non-standard terms**. When the training type is graduate, the LTS will use the entry from the TT/FT field (in VA-ONCE or paper VA Form 22-1999) as the denominator in the RoP calculation.
- In all instances, SCOs must always certify the actual credit hours applicable toward the student's program for all enrollment periods. If the SCO certifies a graduate student for a non-standard length term, VA will no longer convert the credit certified to an equivalent credit hour (ECH).
- Schools **without** individually defined full time modifiers (IDM) for non-standard terms will be required to determine an adjusted FT modifier prior to reporting any graduate training.
- This process is explained in Appendix DV Procedural Advisory: School Certifying Official (SCO) Guidance for Certifying Chapter 33 Graduate Training – Updated Guidance dated 08/13/2021. Questions: If you any questions, please contact your Education Liaison Representative (ELR).

Importance of reporting residential/online classes in VA-ONCE for Ch31 students

- Similar to Ch33 benefit certifications, it is critical for SCO's to report the number of credits the Veteran is taking on-campus or online.
- Reason: if the Veteran is receiving the Ch33 rate under Ch31, they are still affected by same rules that Ch33 has regarding taking only online classes being paid at ½ the nation average BAH for E5 with dependents.

Tungsten/Invoice Payment Processing System (IPPS)

- VRE counselors/staff do not use Tungsten or have access to that system. Instead, the VA has a separate website called IPPS that is used to interface with Tungsten for all authorizations/billing matters. If SCO's have issues with Tungsten it is advised they contact:
- Registration and Support
 - Phone: 1-866-372-1141
 - Email: VAFSCEnterpriseSupport@va.gov
- VA Financial Services Center
 - Phone: 1-877-353-9791
 - Email: vafscshd@va.gov

Credit Memos for VA Overpayments in VRE

- If funds need to be returned to the VA for a VRE veteran a credit memo will need to be generated in Tungsten for the Veteran.
- Once submitted and approved, a letter with billing instructions will be generated to the school to submit a check to the VA for the amount due.
 - **Note:** If a facility/school/vendor fails to submit a payment for its debt after 120 days from the date of the first notification, the delinquent debt will be referred to the Treasury Offset Program for collection.
 - Any payment submitted without a proper credit memo established in the Tungsten Network will be returned to the facility/school/vendor by the VA.
 - **All credits must be paid via check, not electronic funds transfer.**

SCO VA handbook resources

- **SCO handbook:**

https://www.knowva.ebenefits.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_ssnew/help/customer/locale/en-US/portal/55440000001018/content/554400000149088/School-Certifying-Official-Handbook-On-line

- **VRE SCO handbook:**

https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/job_aids/VRE_SCO_Handbook.pdf

How does a Veteran apply for VRE?

- **Online:** <https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/apply-vre-form-28-1900/start>

- **By Mail:**

Fill out an Application for Veteran Readiness and Employment (VRE) (VA Form 28-1900) <https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-28-1900>

Send completed application to:

Department of Veterans Affairs
VR&E Intake Center
PO Box 5210
Janesville, WI
53547-5210

VA VRE Staff Contact Information for Wisconsin

General inquiries about VRE or application status updates may be made at (414) 902-5725.

VRE Supervisor: (Vacant)

Employment Coordinator: James Warner: james.warner2@va.gov; (414) 902 - 5084

Milwaukee: (414) 902-5725

- Kupcho, Denise S Denise.Kupcho@va.gov
- Murray, Tracy VBAMIW Tracy.Murray1@va.gov
- Haefke, David J., VBAMIW David.Haefke@va.gov
- Xiong, Pang VBAMIW Pang.Xiong@va.gov
- Grube, Patrick Patrick.Grube@va.gov (**Veteran Success On Campus Counselor for UWM campus**)

Eau Claire: (715) 834-2154

- Murray, Ashley, VBAMIW Ashley.Murray@va.gov
- Berlin, Dean J., VBAMIW Dean.Berlin@va.gov
- Sobota, Anne, VBAMIW Anne.Sobota@va.gov

Green Bay: (920) 965-0001

- Pierson, Katrina M., VBAMIW Katrina.M.Pierson@va.gov;
- Roloff, Shanna, VBAMIW Shanna.Roloff@va.gov

Madison: (414) 902-5082

- Blazer, Sandra R., VBAMIW Sandra.Blazer@va.gov

Additional Veteran Readiness and Employment Services information can be found at:

<https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/>

Thank you for all you do to assist Veterans!

Any Questions?



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs