

## Information Regarding Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Funding

Department of Human Services

*December 7, 2017*

We recognize that there has been tremendous concern over the Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (DVR) budget and how the department will pay for existing and future services. We also want to recognize and apologize for the misinformation we have provided to clients and contractors. In an effort to alleviate the misinformation we disseminated, we have compiled the below information. We hope this will provide greater clarity on the complex situation DVR is facing and how it will affect current and prospective clients.

If you have additional questions, please contact Susan Foard, Acting Administrator at 808-586-9740, or by email at [sfoard@dhs.hawaii.gov](mailto:sfoard@dhs.hawaii.gov). You may also contact Alison Lee, Acting Assistant Administrator at 808-586-9746, or by email at [alee@dhs.hawaii.gov](mailto:alee@dhs.hawaii.gov).

DVR will continue to provide services to all individuals who are already receiving services under an approved Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

- Once a VR applicant is determined eligible for VR Services, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed jointly between the VR Counselor and the VR Consumer (the term used once an applicant begins services). Once an IPE is completed, VR services are identified and begin based on the selected vendor, means of payment (this could be medical insurance, personal resources or DVR funding depending on the situation as laid out in law), and the duration of service.
- DVR has received the first quarter allotment for FFY 2018 in the amount of \$2.4 million dollars.
- DVR will pay for all approved IPE services provided in FFY 2017 (October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017). There will be a delay in payment which will include late payment charges.
  - Payments will be processed immediately once DVR receives additional funding from federal and state sources. It's unclear when we will receive this funding and will update stakeholders as we get more information.
  - Once we receive funding and the payments are processed, vendors should expect a check from the state within 4-6 weeks.

DVR currently has \$1.8 million carry-over funds for students and youth for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). This means that Hawai'i DVR will still be able to provide existing and future Pre-Employment Transition Services.

- Pre-Employment Transitions Services include educational support services that help students succeed in school and prepare for careers, including in the five major service areas:
  - Job exploration counseling;
  - Work-based learning experience;
  - Workplace readiness;
  - Instructions in self-advocacy; and
  - Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in post-secondary education.
- Two examples of such services include our JUMPSTART Program in selected high schools focusing on workplace readiness training and Special Education-Vocational Rehabilitation Work

Study Program where students also gain work experiences while in school and in community settings.

Effective October 1, 2017, DVR entered into an Order of Selection (HAR § 17-401.1-5: Order of Selection). This Order of Selection is a preemptory measure to ensure the division can adequately serve those with the highest priority as dictated by federal funding guidelines. We regret that this Order of Selection will decrease how many new clients we're able to serve. Here's how the Order of Selection works:

- Individuals who are applying for services on October 1, 2017 will be interviewed and their eligibility determined. Eligible individual's names will be placed on a deferred list and when financial resources are available, first priority will be given to individuals determined most significantly disabled.
- Individuals exempt from being placed on the deferred list are individuals who are currently working but would almost certainly lose his or her current job if not provided specific services or equipment that would enable him or her to retain that employment in the very near future.
  - This exemption does not apply to those losing jobs because the employer is going out of business, eliminating the job, or for other business-related decisions.
  - This exemption does not apply to individuals who are underemployed or seeking to maximize their employment.
  - This exemption does not apply to those who are seeking to change employers.
- Hawai'i must report annually on the status of the Order of Selection. We expect to know upon reporting when we'll be able to begin serving eligible clients on the waitlist based on priority category.

We encourage the public to contact any VR office throughout the state if they wish to inquire additional information on DVR Services. Below is the contact information for each island:

- O'ahu Branch: 808-586-4824
- Services for the Blind Branch: 808-586-5268
- Hawai'i Branch: 808-974-6444
- Maui Branch: 808-984-8350
- Kaua'i Branch: 808-274-3333