



PROCESS OUTLINE REFERRALS

Process Outline Title	Referral of Employment and Community First CHOICES Member for Application to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program Process
Effective Date	May 1, 2017

Purpose: This Process Outline is to help with the referral/application process for persons enrolled in TennCare’s Employment and Community First (ECF) CHOICES program to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program as described in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Bureau of TennCare, Division of Long Term Services and Supports (hereinafter “TennCare”), and the Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Program (hereinafter “VR”). ECF CHOICES and VR are programs related to the Employment First philosophy, which is based upon the concept that all citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life. Because both VR and TennCare offer employment supports for people with disabilities through these respective programs, this Process Outline is intended to ensure that each agency effectively works together to provide those services to common customers.

References:

Applicable MOU references to the Application process to VR include:

MOU Section V.C.2

MOU Section VI.B.11

MOU Section VI.B.14

MOU VII.C.7

Applicable MOU references to the Document sharing process between VR and TennCare’s contracted Managed Care Organizations (MCO) include:

MOU Section V.C.2

MOU Section V.F.3

MOU Section VI.B.12.a-g

Definitions:

Common Customers – individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities aged 14 and up, who are receiving services through the ECF)CHOICES program and who choose to receive vocational rehabilitation pre-employment transition services and/or are determined eligible for VR employment services with the goal of obtaining competitive integrated employment or self-employment, including customized employment and supported employment.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment – assessment conducted at least once annually and as needed with an ECF CHOICES eligible individual to assess strengths, preferences, natural supports, interest in pursuing employment, physical and behavioral health and long-term service and support needs, etc.

ECF CHOICES Member – A person who has been enrolled by TennCare into ECF CHOICES.

ECF CHOICES Support Coordinator (also referred to as the “MCO Support Coordinator”) – The individual who has the primary responsibility for case management and support coordination activities for an Employment and Community First CHOICES individual.

Employment – under this Process Outline shall mean “competitive integrated employment,” full or part-time work at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to those without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with co-workers without disabilities and has access to the same opportunities for benefits and advancement provided to non-disabled workers.

Managed Care Organization (MCO) - a health maintenance organization (“HMO”) that participates in the TennCare program.

Process Outline Summary:

Pursuant to obligations defined in the MOU between TennCare and VR, and related to the Employment and Community First ECF CHOICES Program and Vocational Rehabilitation Program, TennCare MCOs and VR are required to follow specific procedures to complete the Vocational Rehabilitation Application Process. This Process Outline details those procedures, including all related documentation sharing requirements.

Process Outline:

I. Vocational Rehabilitation Application Process:

a. Introductory Notes:

- i. The VR Application Process is meant for those ECF CHOICES Members who have expressed an interest in competitive integrated employment.
- ii. MCO Support Coordinators should ensure the Member consents to being assisted with the application process before assistance is provided.
- iii. The “application” will be made, upon Member’s consent, to VR via the **VR Referral Form** (instructions provided below).

- iv. It's important for individuals to apply far in advance of the ECF CHOICES Service End Date to ensure a seamless transition of employment services from ECF CHOICES to VR without any gaps in services.
 1. This means that **while** an ECF CHOICES Member is receiving Exploration, Discovery or other pre-employment services, the MCO Support Coordinator should begin the referral process for Members interested in competitive employment so that the VR application process can be completed **on or before** the ECF CHOICES services end date. This will ensure that Members transition seamlessly (with no gap in services) from ECF CHOICES services to VR Program services.
- b. If a Member has requested assistance with the VR application process, the MCO Support Coordinator will complete the **Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Form**.
 - i. Fully complete **VR Referral Form** with accurate *ECF CHOICES Member Information, Representative Information, and Support Coordinator Information*.
 1. MCO Support Coordinator shall not complete the last box of the **VR Referral Form**, labeled "This section is to be completed by VR Program Office ONLY."
 - ii. Attach to the Form all applicable Supporting Documentation that is listed in the Form's *Shared Documentation Checklist* (located at end of Form), which includes the following:
 - a. Comprehensive Needs Assessment
 - b. Person-Centered Support Plan
 - c. Disability Documentation
 - i. Only documentation originating from a specialist.
 - ii. Include any relevant documentation about an individual's disability, such as: school, medical, psychiatric, and psychological reports/records.
 - d. Any previous or current ECF CHOICES employment service reports, plans, and documents related to competitive integrated employment (if applicable).
 - e. Guardianship documents (if applicable)
 - f. Copy of signed Release of Confidentiality Information
 - iii. Be sure to note on checklist all documents that are being submitted with the **VR Referral Form**.
- c. Sending the Application:
 - i. Prior to submitting the **VR Referral Form** and Supporting Documentation, the MCO Support Coordinator shall determine the Member's Authorized VR Region.
 1. Authorized VR Regions are based on the Member's County of Residence.
 2. See **DRS Regional Offices with Counties Served Guide**.

- ii. The MCO Support Coordinator will email the **VR Referral Form** and Supporting Documentation to the Authorized VR Regional Office contact listed on the **DRS Regional Offices with Counties Served Guide**.
- d. Once VR receives the **VR Referral Form**, VR will complete the Application Review Process:
 - i. VR will make a determination of VR Program Eligibility within 60 days of receipt of the VR Referral Form.
 - ii. Within five (5) business days following eligibility determination, a representative from the applicable Authorized VR Regional Office (hereinafter referred to as “VR Counselor”) will notify all involved parties as follows:
 - 1. The individual or individual’s guardian/legal representative (must contact according to the preferred method of contact, as evidenced on the **VR Referral Form**);
 - 2. MCO Support Coordinator (via email); and
 - 3. Provider (via email or phone)
- e. Vocational Rehabilitation Intake Session:
 - i. The MCO Support Coordinator will assist the individual with attending the intake session.
 - 1. Assistance may include, but shall not be limited to:
 - a. Helping the individual arrange transportation;
 - b. Reminding the individual of the appointment date, time and location
 - c. Preparing the individual with what to expect during the intake session
 - d. Making sure they bring all necessary documentation, including:
 - i. Verification of SSI; or
 - ii. Verification of SSDI