

Chapter 10
POST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND CASE CLOSURES

10.01 Introduction

10.02 References and Resources

10.03 Post-Employment Services

- a. Purpose
- b. Maintaining Suitable Employment
- c. Services
 - 1. Counseling
 - 2. Job Modification/Reasonable Accommodation
 - 3. Payment of Employment Adjustment Allowance (EAA)
- d. Follow-Up Activities
 - 1. Required Monthly Follow-Up
 - 2. Extended Follow-Up
 - 3. Required Extended Follow-Up for Specific Employment
 - (a) Self-Employment
 - (b) Temporary Employment
- e. Documentation of Follow-Up Activities

10.04 Rehabilitation

- a. Declaration of Rehabilitation
- b. Progression to Rehabilitation
- c. Determination of Nature of Employment
 - 1. Permanent Employment
 - 2. Temporary Employment
 - 3. Seasonal Employment
 - 4. Self-employment
 - 5. Veteran Employed in the Vocational Goal Outlined on the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP)
 - 6. Veteran's Employment Differs from the Planned Goal
 - 7. Veteran Does Not Complete the Vocational Objectives of His/Her IWRP
 - 8. Veteran Received Employment Services Only
 - 9. Veteran Employed in an Occupation Unrelated to the Vocational Goal Outlined in the Rehabilitation Plan
 - 10. Veteran Elects to Pursue Further Education

10.05 Case Closures

- a. Discontinued

- b. Rehabilitated
 - 1. Justification for Suitability of Employment
 - 2. Closure Statement
 - 3. Other Required Documentation
 - 4. VR&E Officer's (VREO's) Concurrence for Closure
 - 5. CWINRS and BDN Update
 - 6. Required Notification Letters
 - (a) Notification of Proposed Rehabilitation
 - (1) Further Education
 - (2) Suitable Employment
 - (b) Notification of Rehabilitation Decision

10.06 Re-entrance into a Rehabilitation Program

- a. Rehabilitated
 - 1. Criteria
 - 2. Determination
- b. Periods of Employment Services.
- c. Multiple Periods of Employment Services

Appendix O. VA Forms

Chapter 10
POST-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND CASE CLOSURES

10.01. Introduction

Post-employment services and case closure are the final phases in the Veteran’s vocational rehabilitation process. This chapter provides information and guidance on post-placement services, periods of employment services, and determining rehabilitation and discontinuance of cases in employment services.

10.02. References and Resources

- Laws: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended
 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 3117
- Regulations: 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 21.190(d)
 38 CFR 21.194(d)(l)
 38 CFR 21.196
 38 CFR 21.197
 38 CFR 21.283
 38 CFR 21.284
- VA Form (VAF): VAF 4107, Your Rights to Appeal our Decision
 VAF 28-1902b, Counseling Record – Narrative Report
 VAF 28-1905d, Special Report of Training
 VAF 28-0850, Checklist for Proposed Rehabilitation
 VAF 28-8872, Rehabilitation Plan

10.03. Post-Employment Services

a. Purpose

Post-placement services are provided to ensure that the Veteran is able to maintain suitable employment. Suitability of employment means that the Veteran’s employment is compatible with his/her disability condition(s), requires reasonably developed skills, and is consistent with his/her interests, aptitudes, and abilities.

b. Maintaining Suitable Employment

When a Veteran obtains employment, the case manager must obtain the necessary information that includes but is not limited to the following:

- Date of employment

- Name and contact information of employer
- Job title
- Essential duties or position description
- Monthly salary
- Type of employment (full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, etc.)
- Employment benefits (health, vacation, etc.)

The case manager may obtain the employment information from the Veteran through direct communication by email, letter, or telephone, or from a third party as well. The third party may be the employer, a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist, Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER), or a school employment coordinator.

The date of employment is the date the Veteran was hired for the position. The follow-up period for post-employment services begins from the date the case manager received notification of Veteran's employment.

The case manager must use VAF 28-1905d (See Appendix O, VA Forms) or CWINRS Notes to clearly document the Veteran's relevant contact and employment information. Documentation must be filed appropriately in the Veteran's Counseling, Education, and Rehabilitation (CER) folder.

c. Services

The case manager will provide employment assistance to a Veteran who has completed the vocational objectives outlined on his/her rehabilitation plan and who has obtained suitable employment. Services that may be authorized during this period may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Counseling

The first few months is the critical period for a Veteran starting a new position. Within this period a new employee is expected to:

- Become reasonably skilled in performing the work requirements
- Effectively relate to supervisors and coworkers

- Gain experience in the work environment

Therefore, it is essential that counseling be provided to the Veteran to ensure that he/she is able to maintain employment. This is also useful in identifying and addressing potential problems such as time management, task management, following directions, job modification, or conflicts with coworkers, management, and/or customers. Some key factors that may also affect satisfactory work adjustment and therefore need to be addressed may include:

- Transportation
- Child and family care
- Personal budgeting and financial management
- Use of leisure time
- Family and marital relationships

2. Job Modification/Reasonable Accommodation

Job modification and reasonable accommodation provides a Veteran with disabilities with the necessary work conditions and tools to perform his/her job duties. The case manager is responsible for ensuring that the Veteran is provided with job modification or reasonable accommodation as soon as the need is established.

Generally, a job modification or reasonable accommodation may be identified while the Veteran is still participating in his/her training program. However, the need may not become evident until after a Veteran has begun working. In this instance, necessary modification or reasonable accommodation must be addressed as soon as possible.

In order to assist the Veteran, employers must be informed regarding provision of job modification and reasonable accommodation.

For job modification and reasonable accommodation for Veterans with disabilities and available resources, refer to M28R.VI.A.4 and 8.

3. Payment of Employment Adjustment Allowance (EAA)

A Veteran who has entered suitable employment immediately upon completing his/her training program, has been declared job ready, and is actively participating in employment services, may be provided an EAA. The EAA payment may be authorized after a determination that the Veteran has satisfactorily participated in post-placement services for at least 30 days and again after 60 days.

For additional information on EAA payment, refer to M28.V.5.

d. Follow-Up Activities

The case manager must follow up with the Veteran at least monthly during the post-employment phase. The follow-up contacts may also be provided by a DVOP specialist or a VA contractor, under the supervision of the case manager. This monthly follow-up is intended to monitor the Veteran's progress in his/her job and to determine if further services are needed to ensure the Veteran's successful adjustment to his/her new employment position. These follow-up activities may be extended beyond the required 60-day period until the Veteran is declared rehabilitated.

1. Required Monthly Follow-Up

The case manager must monitor the Veteran's employment progress through a monthly contact, for a minimum of 60 days from the day the Veteran began his/her employment.

If the Veteran obtains suitable employment prior to completion of his/her vocational training, the monthly contact will begin after the Veteran has completed his/her vocational training objective, has been declared job ready, and an Individualized Employment Assistance Plan (IEAP) has been developed.

If the Veteran obtains suitable employment and the case manager discovers the employment at a later date, the monthly contact will begin after the date of the discovery of the Veteran's employment, the Veteran has been declared job ready, and an IEAP has been developed.

The follow-up activities must address but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Is the Veteran adjusting well to the work environment?
- (b) Is the Veteran able to perform his/her work duties without any difficulties?

(c) Is the Veteran able to maintain satisfactory relationships with his/her co-workers, supervisors, customers, etc.?

(d) Is there any impediment that may prevent the Veteran from maintaining employment?

2. Extended Follow-Up

Provision of the minimum 60-day post-placement follow-up does not necessarily indicate that the Veteran has satisfactorily adjusted to his/her employment. Some Veterans may need continued monitoring of their employment progress beyond this 60-day period, to ensure their successful adjustment.

Additionally, a Veteran may need services beyond those identified in his/her current employment plan. In this instance, the case manager must ensure the IEAP is updated to reflect the additional services. As necessary, the period of services outlined in the IEAP must also be extended to ensure validity of the services. However, the case manager should ensure that the employment services do not exceed the regulatory limit of 18 months.

3. Required Extended Follow-Up for Specific Employment

The case manager must ensure that an extended follow-up is provided for Veterans participating in the following employment services:

(a) Self-Employment – minimum of one year extended follow-up

(b) Temporary Employment – minimum of one year extended follow-up. (See definition in M28R.VI.A.10.04.c) If employment is converted to a permanent position, the case manager must make the 60-day follow-up from the date of the conversion of the employment. The case manager must ensure and verify that there are no impediments to the Veteran's ability to maintain employment.

e. Documentation of Follow-Up Activities

Follow-up activities include face-to-face meetings or communications with the Veteran via telephone, fax, email, or other written correspondence.

The case manager must ensure that all follow-up activities and contacts made with the Veteran and/or a third party are documented on VAF 28-

1905d (See Appendix O, VA Forms) or CWINRS Notes. Documentation must be filed on the middle flap of the Veteran's CER folder. Email communications between the Veteran and the case manager must be printed and filed in the CER file.

The documentation should clearly demonstrate that the Veteran is adjusting to his/her employment, and should outline all services provided to resolve issues encountered.

Follow-up activities specified in M28R.VI.A.10.03.d.1(a)-(d) must be documented as well.

10.04. Rehabilitation

a. Declaration of Rehabilitation

A case manager may declare a Veteran rehabilitated for employment only under the conditions outlined in 38 CFR 21.283 (a)-(d).

Rehabilitated status, as defined in 38 CFR 21.196, is the status in which the goals of a Veteran's Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) or IEAP are substantially achieved. Therefore, a case manager cannot declare a Veteran rehabilitated until the Veteran has substantially achieved the goals of his/her rehabilitation program.

b. Progression to Rehabilitation

The conditions under which a case may be placed in Rehabilitated status from Job Ready (JR) status are prescribed under 38 CFR 21.196. There is an expected sequence of actions, which follows completion of education or training under an IWRP that leads to the declaration of rehabilitation. This is described in the following order of progression:

1. The case manager determines that the Veteran has achieved rehabilitation to the point of employability under 38 CFR 21.190(d) and the Veteran has been declared job ready.
2. The Veteran receives the necessary services to assist in active search for employment as outlined in his/her IEAP.
3. The Veteran obtains employment in either the same occupation as specified in the IEAP or in a closely related occupation. If the Veteran obtains employment in a closely related occupation, the case manager must determine that wages and benefits in the current employment are

commensurate with those received by workers in the same occupation outlined in the original IWRP.

4. Subsequent to the required post-employment follow-up, the case manager makes a determination of whether the employment is suitable and that the Veteran is well adjusted to the job.

c. Determination of Nature of Employment

The case manager must make a determination of the nature of the Veteran's employment for suitability.

1. Permanent Employment

A case manager may declare a Veteran who has been hired in a suitable and permanent position as rehabilitated. A permanent position is one in which the Veteran can expect to maintain employment as long as his/her performance is satisfactory and the hiring organization continues as a viable enterprise.

Employment through a federal government special appointing authority, such as Veterans Recruitment Assistance (VRA), is considered a permanent position.

2. Temporary Employment

A case manager may not declare a Veteran rehabilitated in an employment that is temporary in nature. An employment is considered temporary if the Veteran is hired for a limited period and is not eligible for benefits. When a Veteran is hired for temporary employment, the appointment must be converted to permanent status and the Veteran must maintain this permanent status for at least 60 days before the case manager can declare him/her rehabilitated.

If the temporary employment is not converted to permanent status, the case manager must provide the Veteran with additional employment services, not to exceed the regulatory requirement of 18 months.

3. Seasonal Employment

The case manager will consider seasonal employment, such as construction work, as permanent if this is the occupational pattern.

4. Self-employment

The case manager must defer declaration of a Veteran's rehabilitation for self-employment for one year. The one-year period for employment service will begin after the case manager has determined that the business is viable, operational, and generating income. The extended follow-up services will ensure stability of the Veteran's employment.

5. Veteran Employed in the Vocational Goal Outlined on His/Her IWRP

A case manager may declare a Veteran who has completed the vocational objectives of his/her rehabilitation plan rehabilitated if the Veteran has been employed in the same occupation as outlined in his/her IWRP and has maintained the employment for at least 60 continuous days or one year in self-employment.

6. Veteran's Employment Differs from the Planned Goal

When a Veteran obtains employment in a different field from the training he/she has received under the VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program, the case manager must make a determination if the employment is closely related to the occupational goal outlined in the IWRP. To make this determination, the case manager must examine both the content of training and the depth of training required for both occupations. A Veteran should be able to use the training he/she has received both in terms of content and depth of training to consider a particular field as closely related to the original vocational goal.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) is generally the accepted source for occupational information and offers substantial assistance in making the determination for closely related occupations. It contains useful information, including nature of the work, working conditions, training, other qualifications, and advancement.

The handbook also provides information on related occupations. However, the case manager must review this section carefully since occupations listed under the "Related Occupations" does not necessarily mean that they meet the Chapter 31 requirements for determination of being closely related occupations. For example, the Related Occupations entry for "drafters" states: "Other workers who are required to prepare or understand detailed drawings, make accurate and precise calculations and measurements, and use various measuring devices. This occupational classification includes architects, engineering technicians,

engineers, photogrammetrists, landscape architects, and surveyors.” In this example, a case manager should not consider the physically demanding occupation of a surveyor as closely related to the sedentary job of a drafter using the framework of the VA VR&E Program.

The case manager must keep in mind that for a determination of rehabilitation, a Veteran must be employed in a suitable occupation, meaning employment that is compatible with the Veteran’s disability condition(s) and is consistent with the Veteran’s interests, aptitudes, and abilities.

7. Veteran Does Not Complete the Vocational Objectives of the IWRP

A case manager may be able to declare a Veteran rehabilitated even if the Veteran has not completed the vocational objectives of the rehabilitation plan. However, the Veteran must substantially achieve the goals of his/her rehabilitation program and the case manager ensures the following:

- (a) The Veteran has obtained and retained employment significantly using the services provided under his/her IWRP or IEAP.
- (b) The Veteran’s employment is consistent with his/her interests, aptitudes and abilities.
- (c) The Veteran has been provided the maximum services to assist in maintaining his/her employment.
- (d) The Veteran is employed for 60 continuous days, or one year for temporary employment or self-employment, in the same occupation outlined in his/her rehabilitation plan and is determined to have successfully adjusted to the occupation.

8. Veteran Received Employment Services Only

A Veteran who has been provided with employment services only under an IEAP and has failed to complete the objectives of the plan may still be declared rehabilitated under the same criteria used for a Veteran who failed to complete all of the objectives of his/her IWRP. The case manager may cite 38 CFR 21.196(b)(3)(i) or (ii) for declaration of rehabilitation.

9. Veteran Employed in an Occupation Unrelated to the Vocational Goal Outlined in the Rehabilitation

A case manager may declare the Veteran rehabilitated in an occupation that is unrelated to the vocational goal in his/her rehabilitation plan if the following applies:

- (a) The Veteran has been employed for at least 60 continuous days or one year of self-employment.
- (b) By developing a new IEAP, the Veteran agrees to the change in his/her vocational goal, and the Veteran's employment meets the following conditions:
 - (1) Has been obtained after unsuccessful intensive efforts to secure employment in the occupation outlined in his/her IWRP or related occupation
 - (2) Is consistent with the Veteran's aptitudes, interests, and abilities, and
 - (3) Utilizes some of the academic, technical or professional knowledge and skills that were provided under the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

10. Veteran Elects to Pursue Further Education

A case manager may declare a Veteran rehabilitated if the Veteran pursues additional education or training instead of obtaining employment after completing his/her training under Chapter 31. However, the case manager must ensure that the following criteria are met:

- (a) The additional education or training that the Veteran is pursuing has been considered and is not approvable as part of his/her rehabilitation program.
- (b) The vocational goal that has been determined consistent with the Veteran's aptitudes, abilities, and interests will be enhanced by the Veteran's completion of the additional education or training.

10.05. Case Closures

- a. Discontinued

For specific guidelines for Discontinuance case closures, follow procedures outlined in M28.V.8.

b. Rehabilitated

1. Justification for Suitability of Employment

When a Veteran is declared rehabilitated, the case manager must clearly explain the rehabilitation decision in a closure statement. The closure statement must cite the applicable paragraph in 38 CFR 21.283, which supports the declaration of rehabilitation. In addition, the case manager must provide a summary of the case that includes but is not limited to the following items:

- The Veteran's impairments to employability
- Vocational rehabilitation services provided to the Veteran
- Explanation as to how the rehabilitation services contributed to the Veteran's ability to overcome his/her impairments through suitable employment
- Required employment data

There are instances when a determination of suitability of a Veteran's employment is necessary to validate the rehabilitation decision. This may include occasions when a Veteran accepts employment that is not the same as the vocational goal in his/her rehabilitation plan. The case manager must explain the rehabilitation decision in terms of wages, benefits, and the Veteran's abilities, limitations, and interests.

In cases where a Veteran chooses to maintain current employment that the case manager determines to be unsuitable, the case manager may not declare the Veteran rehabilitated. However, the case manager must re-evaluate the Veteran's rehabilitation program for another potential plan of services that may lead to the Veteran's successful rehabilitation.

2. Closure Statement

The case manager must provide a written justification for the rehabilitation decision in a closure statement. Guidelines for justification of rehabilitation decisions are provided in M28R.VI.A.10.04. The case manager is required to explain clearly the basis of the rehabilitation decision in terms of suitability and nature of the Veteran's employment.

The closure narrative should also include but is not limited to the following information:

- Date of closure statement
- Remaining entitlement
- Current service-connected disability conditions and rating
- SEH Determination
- Vocational goal
- Training objective
- Type and description of degree
- Dates training began and completed
- Cumulative GPA
- Begin date of employment
- Place of employment
- Title of position
- Supervisor's name and contact information
- Work requirements

3. Other Required Documentation

The case manager must ensure that the following documentations are included in the Veteran's CER file:

- A copy of the Veteran's diploma/certificate or official transcript of records
- Narrative for the required declaration of the Veteran's job readiness
- Current IEAP

- Verification of EAA payments (if applicable)
4. VR&E Officer's (VREO's) Concurrence for Closure

Prior to the actual closure of the case, the case manager must submit the VAF 28-0850, Checklist for Proposed Rehabilitation (See Appendix O, VA Forms) with the Veteran's CER folder to the VREO or Assistant VREO for review and concurrence. The checklist must be completed and properly signed and dated by the reviewing officer. The checklist must be filed on top of the middle flap of the CER folder.

5. CWINRS and BDN Update

The case manager must ensure that the Veteran's employment data are correctly entered in CWINRS and BDN. The closure in BDN and CWINRS must reflect the accurate Reason Code (RC). The effective date of a case closed as Rehabilitated in CWINRS and BDN should not be earlier than the date of the VREO's concurrence with the rehabilitation decision, and should match the date of the Rehabilitation notification letter sent to the Veteran.

6. Required Notification Letters

The case manager must inform the Veteran of any actions taken during his/her rehabilitation program:

(c) Notification of Proposed Rehabilitation

(1) Further Education

If rehabilitation is proposed for a Veteran as a result of his/her pursuit of further education, or the Veteran obtains suitable employment that is not the same as the occupational goal outlined in his/her rehabilitation plan, the case manager must provide the Veteran a notification letter informing him/her of the proposed declaration of rehabilitation. The letter must include the Veteran's appellate rights. If the Veteran does not respond after 30 days from the date of the proposed rehabilitation notification letter, the case manager may proceed to close the case as "Rehabilitated."

(2) Suitable Employment

A notification letter of the proposed rehabilitation is not required if rehabilitation of the Veteran is a result of completion of the vocational objectives outlined in his/her signed IWRP.

(d) Notification of Rehabilitation Decision

Upon receipt of the VREO's approval for the rehabilitation closure, the case manager must provide the Veteran a notification letter informing him/her of the rehabilitation decision. The letter must include the effective date of the closure, clear explanation or justification of the decision, and VAF 4107, Veteran's Appellate Rights (See Appendix O, VA Forms).

10.06. Re-entrance into a Rehabilitation Program

A Veteran who has been previously declared rehabilitated may receive additional vocational rehabilitation services under provisions of 38 CFR 21.284. The case manager must make a determination as to whether the previous rehabilitation decision must be overturned prior to re-opening a Veteran's claim for Chapter 31 benefits.

a. Rehabilitated

1. Criteria

A Veteran who has been declared rehabilitated under provisions of 38 CFR 21.283 may be provided additional period of training or services only if the Veteran has a compensable service-connected disability and either:

- (a) The Veteran's service-connected disability has worsened to the extent that it precludes him/her from performing the job requirements for which he/she was previously declared rehabilitated, or
- (b) The Veteran's previous employment for which he/she was previously declared rehabilitated is found to be unsuitable based on the Veteran's specific employment handicap and capabilities.

2. Determination

The case manager must make a determination for overturning the previous rehabilitation decision immediately upon receipt of the Veteran's reapplication for vocational rehabilitation. The Veteran will be scheduled for a comprehensive evaluation to determine if he/she meets the criteria for overturning the previous rehabilitation decision. This determination

must be documented on VAF 28-1902b (See Appendix O, VA Forms) and filed in the Veteran's CER folder.

(a) If the determination results in a negative decision, the Veteran must be informed in writing to explain the reason(s) for the decision, and be provided with his/her appellate rights (VAF 4107, See Appendix O).

(b) If the determination results in a positive decision:

(1) The case manager must submit the case to the VREO for concurrence

(2) Upon the VREO's concurrence, the Veteran's application will be processed immediately using the Auto-Generated Eligibility Determination (GED) processing

(3) The Veteran will be scheduled for an appointment for further evaluation and planning of additional services.

b. Periods of Employment Services

A Veteran who has been receiving employment services may be provided an additional period of training and related services, if any of the following conditions is met:

1. The rehabilitation services originally provided to the Veteran are currently determined as inadequate to make the Veteran employable in the occupation for which he/she pursued rehabilitation
2. The vocational goal or employment that was originally developed for the Veteran is no longer suitable, or
3. Due to technological changes that occurred after the Veteran has been declared job ready, the Veteran is no longer able to:
 - (a) Perform the duties of the occupation for which he/she trained, or those of a related occupation, or
 - (b) Obtain employment in the occupation for which he/she trained, or in a related occupation.

c. Multiple Periods of Employment Services

A Veteran may be eligible for employment assistance even if the Veteran has been provided employment services previously in either the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program or a vocational rehabilitation program under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amended. The Veteran must have completed or participated in employment services for at least 90 days. For eligibility criteria for employment services, refer to M28R.VI.A.2.