Vocational Rehabilitation's Core Principles of Career Pathways

When vocational rehabilitation (VR) integrates a career pathways and advancement approach into everyday practice, they help workers and businesses see how today's choices can connect to long-term goals. The following core principles outline steps VR should follow to build career pathways and advancement into counseling, planning, and business engagement.

Step 1: VR can ensure clients are informed about Career Pathways.

- Discuss Career Pathways early in the counseling process, in an accessible way, and include available supports to access a range of career opportunities.
- Let clients know that they can return to VR at any point when they are ready, whether they are looking for a promotion or to move into a new job.
- Help clients understand the importance of, and difference between, short and long-term goals, and know that VR is there to support them through all phases of their career.

Step 2: VR can help clients understand credentialing requirements and experience needed for advancement.

It is helpful for clients to become familiar with some of the career pathways elements. For example, they should have a general understanding of what careers are represented within a career cluster. A career cluster is a group of occupations and industries that have a common core of knowledge and skills for a broad set of careers.

Another critical component of helping clients understand what's needed for advancement is discussing and explaining stackable credentials that allow for career success, upward mobility, and industry training needs. Examples of stackable credentials may include college certificates or degrees, job specific certificates, security clearances, a specific license or badge, or any combination of training that an employer or industry requires.

Step 3: VR can help businesses access a skilled workforce.

- Support upward mobility of current staff.
- Provide expertise about accommodations for all employees with disabilities.
- Find candidates for entry-level positions made available by the advancement of their incumbent workers, known as upskill/backfill.
- Maximize employer sponsored education benefits by coordinating with VR services.

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