**STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO**

**Services with State Services for the Blind (SSB)**

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT UNIT (WDU)**

**Greater Minnesota (non-Metro) Version**

**Prepared by the**

**DeafBlind Committee of the**

**State Rehabilitation Council – Blind**

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**I need help getting a job. I need help looking for a job and getting ready. I live in Minnesota. I do not live in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area (Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington).**

**First Step: Information and Application**

1. **I contact the SSB office in my area and request an orientation and intake appointment with the area Counselor.**
2. **If I do not know how to contact my area SSB office, I can contact the St. Paul SSB office and ask. I must tell SSB where I live and my home address. 800-652-9000 Email:** [**ssb.info@state.mn.us**](mailto:ssb.info@state.mn.us)**.**
3. **I attend my orientation and intake meeting with the area SSB Counselor. It may be in person at the area office or through video or on the phone. Video might be on Zoom or Teams. I can ask for accommodations, such as a tactile interpreter, CART captions, and copies of the papers ahead of time.**
4. **The SSB Counselor will explain my rights and responsibilities as an SSB customer. I will get a lot of information about SSB services. I will learn about the vocational rehabilitation (VR) process, criteria for eligibility, roles, responsibilities and timelines. I will learn about my rights and the Client Assistance Program (CAP).**

**Now I need to decide.**

* **If I change my mind and decide no interest in services through SSB Workforce Development Unit, then the SSB counselor will give me information about other resources.**
* **If I am still interested in getting services through SSB Workforce Development Unit, I will fill out the application. That is the “intake” part. I can get help with that. I will need to give my exam report and letter from Social Security Administration (SSA, SSI, SSDI) and other information the counselor needs. I will sign forms to allow SSB to contact my medical providers for information on my vision loss and any other disabilities I have.**
* **SSB counselor will ask me many questions about my vision, my barriers to finding and keeping a job, if I have people who help and support me. Counselor will ask if I have any other disabilities, medical insurance, school, work before (work history). Counselor will ask if I receive any services such as public housing, do I have a social worker or am I receiving services such as a PCA/ILS worker. I may need to sign releases of information so the counselor can get more documentation.**

**Step Two: Eligibility**

1. **I will wait to hear if I am eligible for services through SSB. I may learn this at the intake meeting. I may be eligible to get services, but I might need to wait.**
2. **I will receive a letter that lets me know the next steps.**
3. **My counselor will contact me to set up a meeting.**
4. **I will need to attend my meeting with the SSB counselor. I also will need to reply to calls or emails from my SSB counselor. I will work with my SSB counselor and answer questions.**
   * **I will need to tell the counselor about my needs, interests and what I am skilled and good at. This is called my strengths.**
   * **I will need to tell the counselor about my past jobs and work experiences.**
   * **I will have to tell the counselor if I am ready to work a job.**
   * **I can ask my counselor any questions.**

**Step Three: Individual Plan for Employment**

1. **My SSB counselor and I will start working on my Individual Plan for Employment. We will discuss and choose my job goal. I understand that if I change my mind later, I must tell my counselor so we can discuss changing the Plan.**
2. **I must sign my name on the Individual Plan for Employment that we write together. I must sign that Plan in 90 days. 90 days means 3 months. If I do not sign the Plan, then the SSB counselor will close my case. That means I will only get counseling guidance and information and referral. I will not get any other services if I do not sign the Plan.**
3. **My SSB counselor will ask me if I have people who can help and support me. Some people are my family and friends. My counselor will ask me if I have a CADI waiver or a county social worker.**
4. **My SSB counselor will ask me what I want to do for my job, my work history and they will ask me why I want to work.**
5. **My SSB counselor and I will need to work together to set up the Plan. We both must agree on the job goal and services that will help me get ready and/or get a job.**
6. **My SSB counselor and I will talk about more school, or if I need to get other training to help me get ready for a job.**

* **Maybe I will need Adjustment To Blindness (ATB) or Orientation and Mobility (O and M) training.**
* **I might need to do a work assessment.**
* **Maybe I will need to practice how to answer and ask questions for an interview.**
* **Maybe I will take tests to learn more about different kinds of jobs or to learn what kind of jobs fit best with my personality and background.**

1. **It is my responsibility to reply quickly to emails, texts, phone or videophone (VP) messages. “Quickly” means I need to respond in one or two days.**

**What do I need to know about the Individual Plan for Employment?**

* **I can change my mind about the job goal or other services on the Individual Plan for Employment. That is OK. I will need to tell my SSB counselor. If we agree on different services or a new job goal, then my counselor will make a new Individual Plan for Employment. I will need to sign the new plan.**
* **If my Individual Plan for Employment expires, then my SSB counselor will tell me. I will need to sign the new Individual Plan for Employment to keep receiving services.**
* **If the Plan expires, I cannot get services until I sign it again.**

**What does “Informed Choice” mean?**

**It means that I will have options to choose from. My SSB counselor will give me information. I will need to think about my former work and school experiences, what I like, and ask questions. I will need to think about pros and cons of each option. I will need to pick one option that is best fit for me. My Counselor will work with me and give advice what is best for me. I can also ask family and friends.**

**Who is on my SSB Team?**

1. **My Counselor leads my team**
2. **Vocational Rehabilitation Technician (VRT)**

* **VRT helps my counselor and takes care of paying for services**

1. **Employment Specialist**
   * **Employment Specialist talks with the boss and teaches the company about what I need**
   * **Employment specialist helps me look for a job**
2. **Assistive Technology Specialist.** 
   * **Assistive Technology Specialist will assess for any assistive technology I need to get and train for the job. Assistive technology might be a CCTV, a laptop with JAWS, a Braille reader, or other technology to help me on my job.**
3. **Supervisor of my counselor.** 
   * **I must talk with my SSB counselor first and explain what I need. If the counselor does not understand or does not listen to me, then I can contact the Supervisor.**
   * **I can contact the Supervisor if I feel that I am not getting services.**
   * **But I understand the Supervisor is very busy so I will contact only if it is a very good reason or serious or important.**

**Step Four: Job Placement**

**After my training, now I am ready to look for a job. What do I do now?**

1. **There will be many things I will need to do before I can get a job. These are some things I might need to do:**
   * **Update my resume.**
   * **Practice interviewing.**
   * **Learn how to do a job search, and practice how to do a job search.**
   * **Do real job interviews.**
   * **Meet with my Employment Specialist. If I have worries or concerns about being ready to work, then I will discuss them. I can talk to the Employment Specialist about how to find a job.**

**My SSB counselor and I will decide who will help and support me with services. Sometimes it is a different agency. Sometimes it is SSB. Sometimes it is a different agency and SSB together.**

1. **I got a job offer. Now what do I do?** 
   * **Email or call my SSB counselor and let them know.**
   * **Send the email or offer letter from the company to my SSB counselor.**
   * **Make a plan with my SSB counselor for any support I may need on the job.**
   * **I might need assistive technology for my job.**
   * **Employment Specialist may come to look at the place of my new job and ask questions about the people and the building. The Employment Specialist might talk to my new boss about what I need on the job so I can do good work. I understand they want to make sure that my new job is accessible. This will help me succeed.**
   * **I will work for at least 90 days at the new job and see if I like it. I need to stay for 3 months. I also want to become comfortable with the people and learn if my boss will support me.**
   * **If I decide that I do not like the job, then I need to talk to my SSB Counselor. I need to explain what is happening and what is hard. I understand that it is important for me to talk to my SSB counselor. I should not quit my job until we talk first. After I meet with my SSB counselor, then the SSB staff will talk with my boss to see if there can be some changes to help me and make a better fit for me and the job.**
2. **I have been working at my job for 90 days, and I like the work. What do I do next?**

* **I will need to talk with my SSB counselor about the job. I will discuss about what was good and if there is anything I still need help with.**
* **My SSB counselor and I will discuss about closing my case because I have a job and do not need any more services.**
* **We will agree best time to close case.**
* **My counselor will send me a closure letter. The law says that my SSB counselor must send it to me. If I change my mind, then I can appeal or disagree and complain about my case closure. The instructions about how to appeal will be in the same case closure letter.**

**Step Five: After Case Closure**

**I can contact SSB for help, if any of these things happens:**

* **I need more services to help me keep my job.**
* **I need to advance in my job, or I need to change to a different job.**
* **I need help to solve problems at work**
* **I have questions about my job**
* **I lost my job**