

AIVRS CASE FILE REVIEW TOOL

INTRODUCTION



The AIVRS Case File Review Tool is designed for use by AIVRS staff in monitoring the vocational rehabilitation (VR) service process, provision, and documentation. The AIVRS Case File Review Tool was adapted from a document originally developed by Dick Corbridge. The AIVRS Case File Review Tool addresses Eligibility, IPE development, and IPE use and can be used to gain a greater understanding of the VR Counselor's work with consumers, as well as areas where policy might be improved. The instrument can be used as both an opportunity for training as well as program evaluation. AIVRS Directors and counselors that learn to use the instrument can begin to monitor their practices through case file reviews. The case file review provides an important evaluative component for programs to gather data and identify strengths and areas for improvement in case management. By using this instrument, the goal is for AIVRS staff to identify strategies and practices that will improve program performance and successful employment outcomes.

This instrument can be used to gauge the progress, communication level, and effectiveness of the counselor in working with Tribal members with disabilities. Each case file represents an individual with unique needs and the quality of the case file may represent the quality of the relationship built between the counselor and the consumer.

Maintaining consumer confidentiality at all points of the VR service process is important. Signed release of information (ROI) statements ensure that the consumer knows which agencies are sharing information and for what reasons. Separate ROIs are required for each agency and purpose. For example, one ROI might be used to gather information about eligibility from a medical agency, while a separate ROI is required for setting up services with various vendors during IPE development. In addition, consumer cases that are shared with the state VR agency require another ROI.

Instructions for using the AIVRS Case File Review Tool for an internal review:

Beginning of the Review

1. Review the instrument to become familiar with the indicators (e.g. items in the checklist below) for Eligibility, IPE development, and IPE use and to understand the VR process and documentation. When you have completed the internal review, gather a sample of consumer case files reviews (see 2. below for guidelines).
2. Guidelines for gathering a sample of case file:
Select about 10 - 15% of open case files, with a **minimum of 10 case files**. In addition, programs can also select 10 – 15% of closed case files to review, as a method of gauging possible changes in how services are currently provided compared to how services were previously provided. Reviewing more case files will provide a more accurate view of the patterns in the case files. Make sure the case files you review are from multiple VR counselors (if you have more than one VR counselor) because it will help identify areas that need improvement in terms of consistency across VR counselors and best practices can then be shared.
3. Ensure that your case files have an appropriate case file coding number scheme to identify case files being reviewed.

Conducting the Review

1. Select a case file to review and complete the demographic data section of the instrument that includes: AIVRS Program Name, Date Reviewed, Name of Reviewer, Whether Case is Open or Closed, and Case File Number.
2. Continue to the "Eligibility" Section of the instrument and begin to answer each question and sub-question. Appropriate responses are "Yes/No/Don't

know.”

3. Comment boxes are provided for the reviewer to provide any pertinent comments with responses.
4. Complete questions 1-8 in the Eligibility Section. When responding to the questions in this tool, examine and use case notes and correspondence included in the case file to support responses. The reviewer should not rely on their memory of the case and should instead use the documentation in the case file to support their responses.
5. Begin answering questions 1-17 in the IPE Development Section.
6. Answer questions 1-6 in the Employment Section
7. Answer questions 1-4 in the Closure Section.
8. Answer questions 1-3 of the last section, Shared Case with State VR.
9. Complete the form by answering the questions in the Confidentiality Section.

Reviewing the Results and Follow-up Review

1. Review the data results or output for “% of Required Indicators Met” after the completion of the AIVRS Consumer Case File Review for each of the files reviewed.
2. Identify strengths and weaknesses by examining how many (or what percentage of) case files reviewed meet each of the indicators. For example, how many of the case files reviewed had signed and dated applications for service? Is it more than 80% of the case files reviewed or less? If over 80% of case files reviewed, discuss what VR practices contributed to that indicator, and how those positive practices can be maintained. For example, positive, timely and clear communication with the consumer might increase the likelihood of signed and dated applications. If fewer than 80% of case files reviewed met that indicator, think about: whether that number can be improved, what barriers are preventing change (e.g. no follow-up calls or letters or a lack of timely response), and how those barriers can be addressed.
3. With the AIVRS Program team, set targets and develop a case management plan to sustain high percentage indicators, and to decrease the number of incidents of low percentage indicators. In your plan, identify the goals, activities, resources, timelines, and responsibilities to meet proposed targets. Also, consider how the case file might indicate a positive or strained relationship with the counselor, and what other factors might impact services being provided.
4. Identify a date (a minimum of 6 months is recommended) to complete a follow-up case file review to determine the impact of the case management plan on your VR practices and adjust accordingly.

Outcomes

The AIVRS Case File Review Tool provides a qualitative and quantitative approach to address the maintenance and improvement of VR practices involving case management. It provides a helpful measure for VR counselors to assess their own case management practices and to develop common practices in AIVRS programs that may have multiple counselors engaged in case management. Taking the time to conduct case file reviews and address areas for improvement will result in improved program performance and increased employment outcomes for AIVRS consumers. To monitor progress, AIVRS Directors can choose to conduct random case file reviews at least annually. Other directors may conduct random case file reviews monthly, with staff review of at least one to two files per week.

Disclaimer

The contents of this AIVRS Case File Review Tool were developed under a grant from the Department of Education (PR/Award #H250Z150002). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3 and 3474) AIVRTTAC will make updates and corrections to the material in order to ensure legal sufficiency, accuracy of information, and accessibility.

Program Name	
Date Reviewed	
Name of Reviewer	
Is the case open or closed?	
If closed , please select one of the following outcomes: ▪ Successfully ▪ Before application (at referral) ▪ Before eligibility (at application) ▪ Before IPE however after eligibility ▪ With an IPE (unsuccessfully closed)	
Case File Number	

Section A: Eligibility (A signed ROI is needed to obtain relevant information regarding eligibility.)		Yes/No/Don't know	Comments/Evidence
1	Is there a signed and dated AIVRS application for services?		
	A. If yes, please write the date of application in the comments section.		
	B. If no, please briefly explain in comments section.		
2	Is the applicant a member of a federal or state recognized tribe?		
	A. Are supporting documents provided (e.g. tribal identification cards or the Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood or Certificate of Degree of Alaska Native)? <i>(CDIB is only used as supporting documentation if it is what is used by the Tribe to determine membership. A letter should be requested from the Tribe stating that the CDIB is the Tribe's method of membership.)</i>		

3	Does the applicant live on or near the reservation, and in the designated service area?		
		Yes/No/Don't know	Comments/Evidence
	A. Are supporting documents provided (e.g. address on utility bill, map, description of location, or village name)?		
4	Is there a case note or documentation that indicates the applicant, or representative has been notified in writing of the following rights:		
	A. to an impartial due hearing/appeals process?		
	B. to pursue services from the Client Assistance Program (CAP)?		
	C. that all personal information collected is confidential?		
5	Does the applicant have a documented mental or physical impairment? <i>(Review correspondence and/or case notes to ensure there is documentation of the disability or impairment included in the case file.)</i>		
6	Does the impairment cause a substantial impediment to employment? Please explain in the comments section. <i>(In addition to any program document, such as a "severe disability statement" form, please review case notes and notes on intake interview to ensure there is a clear indication in the case file of how the consumer's disability or impairment effects potential employment.)</i>		
7	Will the applicant benefit in terms of an employment outcome from VR services? <i>(Examples of Sources of this Information/documentation: An applicant's testimony about their disability and how the disability is a barrier to gaining employment must be based upon documentation. The VR Counselor or Program Director should provide an explanation as to how the provision of VR services will address the applicant's impediment to employment resulting in successful employment outcome.)</i>		

8	Does the applicant require VR services to achieve an employment outcome? <i>(Review case notes and notes on intake interview to ensure there is a clear indication in the case file of how VR services will reduce barriers to employment caused by consumer's impairment. Review case notes to ensure there is a reasonable expectation of benefit from an employment outcome.)</i>	Yes/No/Don't know	Comments/Evidence
9	Was the applicant determined eligible within 60 days of the application or agreed to an extension of time? <i>(Compare signature date on application to eligibility determination date, and describe the reason for an extension, if applicable.)</i>		
	A. Please write the date of eligibility determination in the comments section.		
Section B: IPE Development			
1	Is there evidence that the consumer and VR counselor <i>worked together</i> to develop the IPE (i.e. signatures from both consumer and counselor)? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they identify the actions taken in IPE development by the consumer and VR counselor.)</i>		
2	Is the vocational goal (description of the specific employment outcome) consistent with the consumer's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice (GREAT 8)? Please provide a brief description of evidence (e.g. Eligibility form, Case notes, medical documentation, Interests Listed in Application) <i>(Review case notes and notes on intake interview to find information about consumer's strengths, resources, interests, etc.)</i>		
3	Does the consumer's IPE <i>clearly describe</i> the VR services needed to achieve an employment outcome? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they support that the IPE service is needed to achieve the employment outcome. Consider using an ROI where necessary.)</i>		
	A. Is the employment outcome provided in an integrated setting? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they identify the appropriate integrated setting specifically designed for each consumer.)</i>		

4	Is there evidence that assistive technology (AT) needs were addressed? <i>(Review case notes to ensure the intake and IPE address whether or not AT is required. Consider using an ROI where necessary.)</i>	Yes/No/Don't know		Comments/Evidence
	A. If AT is needed, does the IPE describe the service and training necessary to manage such services? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they complement the IPE and VR language.)</i>			
5	Is there evidence that personal assistance services were addressed? <i>(Review case notes to ensure the intake and IPE address whether or not PA services are required. Consider using an ROI where necessary.)</i>			
	A. If personal assistance services are needed, does the IPE describe the service and training necessary to manage such services? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they complement the IPE and VR language.)</i>			
6	Were the timelines for the consumer achieving the employment outcome clearly identified in the IPE? <i>(Review case notes to ensure that IPE timelines were established.)</i>			
7	Were all the dates to start each IPE service clearly stated in the IPE? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they address the reason for established service start dates.)</i>			
8	Were all the dates to end each consumer service clearly stated in the IPE? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they address the reason for the end of service dates.)</i>			
9	Is there clear evidence that informed choice was exercised by consumer, or consumer's representative, in choosing the service provider(s)? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they support the IPE. Consider using an ROI where necessary.)</i>			
	A. Is there a clear description of the methods to procure such services? (How was the vendor selected for the service?) <i>(Review case notes to ensure they support the IPE.)</i>			

11	Is there a clear description of how progress toward an employment outcome will be evaluated for each service (i.e. milestones towards progress)? Please provide evidence (e.g. Clear case notes to document progress, benchmarks listed to achieve goal, etc.). <i>(Review case notes to ensure they support the description of progress.)</i>	Yes/No/Don't know		Comments/Evidence
12	Do the IPE and corresponding case notes clearly describe the terms, conditions, and responsibilities of: <i>(Consider using an ROI where necessary.)</i>			
	A. the consumer in relation to an employment outcome?			
	B. any third-party agency (tribal, state VR) in relation to an employment outcome?			
	C. the AIVRS program staff in relation to an employment outcome?			
13	Does the consumer have a significant disability that might involve a supported employment setting? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they describe the setting and reasoning.)</i>			
	A. For a consumer with the most significant disabilities, is there a description of an appropriate employment outcome in a supported employment setting? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they include a detailed description of the situation.)</i>			
14	Was the consumer informed that post-employment services are available if required and upon request? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they describe the post-employment services conversation.)</i>			
15	Is there clear evidence that the consumer, and/or representative, signed the IPE and were provided a copy of the IPE? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they demonstrate that the consumer and/or representative were provided a copy of the IPE. Consider using an ROI where necessary.)</i>			
16	Is there clear evidence that an annual review of the consumer IPE took place? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they support the IPE review. Consider using an ROI where necessary.)</i>			

17	Is there evidence that culturally appropriate services were provided to the consumer throughout the provision of services? <i>(Review activities listed in IPE as well as case notes for evidence of culturally appropriate services.)</i>	Yes/No/Don't know		Comments/Evidence
	Section C: Employment			
1	Is there evidence in the file that expenditures are connected to the services listed in the IPE? Were the expenditures based on the TVR program's policies and procedures? <i>(Review case notes as well as financial documents to locate this information.)</i>			
2	Is there clear evidence that comparable services and benefits were identified for services when available? <i>(Review case notes and correspondence as well as the IPE to locate this information.)</i>			
3	Is there clear evidence that amendments to IPE were made as needed? <i>(Review case notes as well as the IPE to locate this information.)</i>			
4	Is there clear evidence that the TVR counselor and the consumer maintained contact while the consumer was seeking employment? <i>(Review case notes as well as correspondence to locate this information.)</i>			
5	Once employed/self-employed is there clear evidence that the TVR counselor and the consumer maintained contact? <i>(Review case notes as well as correspondence to locate this information.)</i>			
6	Is there evidence that the consumer was placed in an employment/self-employment outcome consistent with what was listed on the IPE as their employment goal? <i>(Review the IPE or related amendments to locate this information.)</i>			
	Section D: Case Closure			
1	If this was a successful closure, was the case closed at least 90 days after the employment start date?			
	A. Is there evidence in the file showing the employment start date?			

		Yes/No/Don't know		Comments/Evidence
	B. When was the employment start date?			
	C. When was the case closure date?			
	D. Is there evidence in the file of the employment offer from the employer? <i>(Review file for employment letter, business plan, pay stubs or profit/loss documents.)</i>			
	E. Is the employment outcome in a competitive integrated environment? <i>(Review case notes or paystub showing wage, hours, etc.)</i>			
2	Was the consumer notified in writing that the case was closed or is closing? <i>(Review case notes or correspondence section to ensure that the consumer was notified in writing.)</i>			
	A. <i>Did the case closure include information on the appeals process and CAP?</i>			
3	If the case was closed ineligible due to severity of disability, was there documentation that the consumer would be contacted 1 year after case closure to re-evaluate their ability to work? <i>(Review case notes or eligibility form to ensure that the consumer will be contacted.)</i>			
	A. <i>If the case has been closed for a year or more, is there evidence that the consumer was contacted to re-evaluate their ability to work?</i>			
4	Were post-employment services provided to this consumer or was this revisited at the time of case closure? <i>(Review the IPE or case notes to ensure that this was discussed with the consumer.)</i>			
	Section E: Shared Case with State VR <i>(Obtain an ROI before sharing information about consumers.)</i>			
1	Was there state VR agency involvement in this case? <i>(Review case notes to ensure they demonstrate that the consumer was offered State VR services.)</i>			

	A. If yes, is there clear evidence in the IPE that this case was shared with the State VR agency? <i>(Review state document and case notes to ensure they detail and monitor state involvement.)</i>	Yes/No/Don't know		Comments/Evidence
2	Is there clear evidence that the State VR Agency contributed to the consumer's vocational rehabilitation costs? <i>(Review tribal and state procurement documentation and case notes.)</i>			
	Section F: Confidentiality			
1	Are there ROIs for each of the above noted categories where information about a consumer is shared between or across specific agencies? <i>(Separate ROIs are required for every agency with whom information is shared.)</i>			
2	Are the ROIs current (based on the program's policies and procedures regarding this)?			