



# Vocational Rehabilitation Program Fact Sheet: Eligibility Determination and Disability Classification

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Every application for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program is reviewed by a qualified rehabilitation counselor who makes an eligibility determination on a case-by-case basis. To be found eligible, a person must demonstrate that: (1) s/he has a verifiable disabling condition, (2) the condition results in an impediment to employment, and (3) s/he requires VR services to obtain or retain employment. The individual must also express a desire to become employed, and the VR counselor must believe that the individual can reach an employment outcome with the assistance of VR services.

Individuals who are determined to be eligible for VR services are assigned by their counselors to a disability category. Disability category classification is based on three factors: (1) the number of significant functional limitations a person has, (2) the number of services required, and (3) the length of time that services will be necessary. Disability classifications are *not* based on the type of disability a person has, but rather the effect of that disability on a person's ability to function and the level of services needed for him/her to become successfully employed. Disability classifications are used to determine which individuals are served first when the agency does not have the resources to serve all eligible individuals.

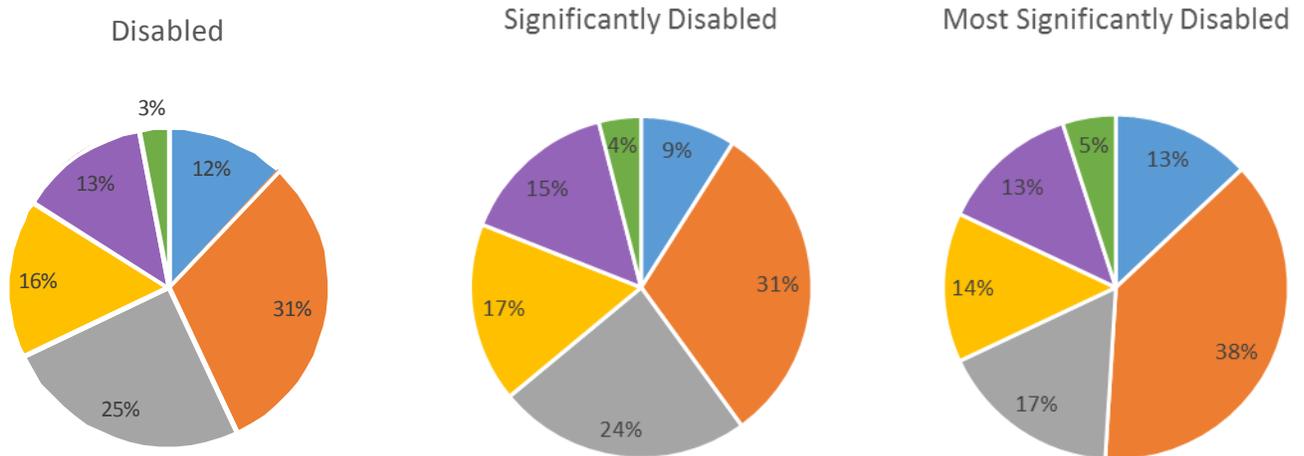
There are three disability classification categories: (1) most significantly disabled (MSD), (2) significantly disabled (SD), and (3) disabled (D). Individuals who have three or more serious functional limitations, require multiple services (defined as three or more), and will require services over an extended period of time (six months or longer) are classified as MSD. Individuals who have two serious functional limitations, require multiple services, and require services over an extended period of time are classified as SD. Individuals who do not meet the criteria for MSD or SD classification (because they have fewer serious functional limitations, need fewer services, and/or need services only for a short time) are classified as D.

Federal regulation requires that individuals classified as MSD be served first, followed by SD, and then D, as funding allows. Individuals are placed on a waiting list until such time that the agency has resources to serve them; and individuals are removed from the waiting list according to disability classification. All individuals classified as MSD must be served before any individual who is classified as SD, and so forth. Individuals are moved off the waiting list within their disability classification according to the order in which they applied. The federal Rehabilitation Services Administration calls this system of service prioritization based on classification of disability significance and creation of waiting lists an Order of Selection.

As of 31 December 2014, USOR's VR program was serving 15,681 people. Of those, 724 were in applicant status, 4,164 individuals were on a waiting list, and 10,793 individuals either had an employment plan or were in the process of developing a plan. USOR began an Order of Selection on 28 February 2015, and from that date until November 2015, all new applicants who were found eligible were placed on a waiting list. In November, USOR opened the MSD category and began removing people from the waiting list within that category. A total of 1,714 people were moved off the waiting list in January 2016, and the MSD category remains open to immediately serve all eligible individuals who are classified as MSD. The SD and D categories remain closed at this time. USOR closely monitors the waiting list and the rate of VR program expenditures with an eye toward opening these categories as soon as possible.

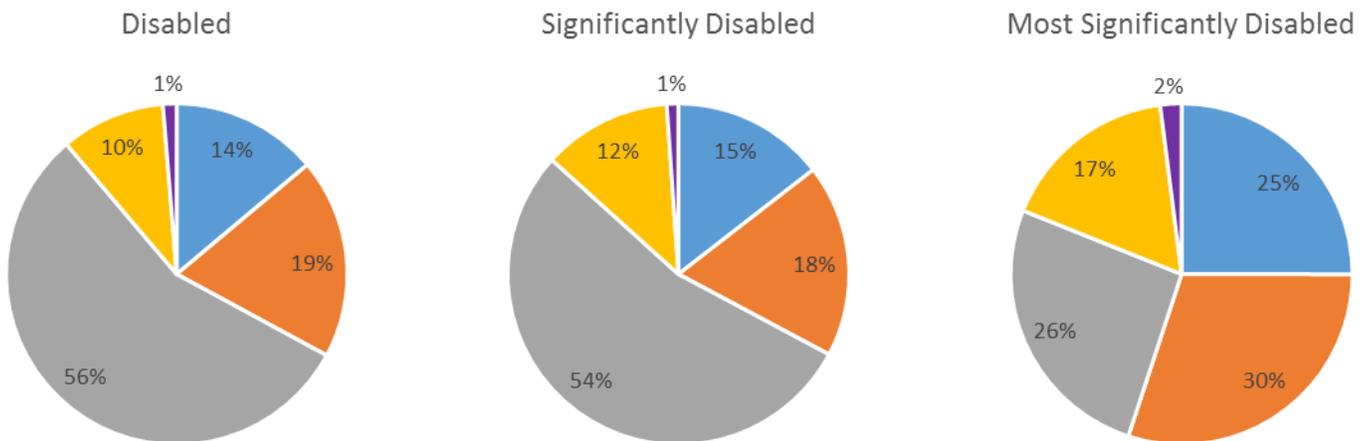
The accompanying charts show how each disability classification category is currently divided in terms of client age and how disability types are represented across disability classification categories.

## Disability Classification by Age Category\*



Age 10-19	Age 40-49
Age 20-29	Age 50-59
Age 30-39	Age 60+

## Disability Classification by Disability Type\*



Accident/Birth Injury/Congenital
LD/ADHD/Autism/Other Cognitive
Other Psychological
Disease
Other