

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Priority Category/Order of Selection Fact Sheet

Priority of Services

State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies that do not have sufficient resources, both funding and staff, to serve all eligible individuals are required by the federal Rehabilitation Act to implement an order of selection for services. The order of selection must assure that individuals with the most significant disabilities will be selected first to receive services. Maryland has been under an order of selection since the early 1990s.

Maryland's Current Priority Categories

Category 1 – Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities

These are individuals determined eligible for the VR program whose:

1. Severe physical or mental impairment(s) seriously limits three or more functional capacities such as:
 - Mobility
 - Communication
 - Self-care
 - Self-direction
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Work tolerance
 - Work skillsin terms of an employment outcome; and
2. Rehabilitation is projected to require multiple services and an extended period of time (at least six months).

Category 2 – Individuals with Significant Disabilities

These are individuals determined eligible for the VR program whose:

1. Severe physical or mental impairment(s) seriously limits at least one functional capacity such as:
 - Mobility
 - Communication
 - Self-care
 - Self-direction
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Work tolerance
 - Work skillsin terms of an employment outcome; and
2. Rehabilitation is projected to require multiple services and an extended period of time (at least six months).

Category 3 – Individuals with Non-severe Disabilities

These are individuals determined eligible for the VR program who do not meet the definition of significant disability. Category 3 has been closed for services since the early 1990s.

Assignment of Priority Category for an Eligible Individual

DORS counselors determine the appropriate priority category on an individual basis during the eligibility determination process, based on documented disability information. SSI/SSDI beneficiaries are considered to have a significant disability and may have a most significant disability. DORS policy automatically designates as having a most significant disability individuals:

1. Individuals with certain disabilities (e.g., blindness, quadriplegia).
2. Individuals eligible for long-term supports of BHA and pursuing competitive or supported employment.

Individuals eligible for long-term supports provided by DDA and pursuing competitive integrated employment are subject to Order of Selection based upon functional limitations.

Notification of Priority Category

DORS Counselors advise eligible individuals in writing of their category assignment and whether they will be on the waiting list. Eligible individuals can appeal their category decision.

Limited Service Provision

Individuals in Category 1 or 2 may be provided guidance and counseling and certain assessment services while on the waiting list.

Current Waiting List

DORS administrators close and open categories as funding and staffing permits. Contact DORS staff to find out whether there is a waiting list for Category 1 and Category 2 and, if so, what the current wait for services is. Please understand that your wait for services may be longer than the current length of the waiting list. Category 3 remains closed for services.