Recruitment of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

# Introduction

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) play a pivotal role in empowering individuals with disabilities to achieve meaningful work and lead fulfilling lives. This personal and professional autonomy is accomplished through individuals with disabilities exercising control and choice in their lives. Their expertise lies not only in counseling but also in fostering inclusive workplaces, advocating for equitable opportunities, and connecting individuals to resources.

# **Qualifications and Skills for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors**

Recruiting highly skilled VRCs requires clarity about the qualifications and personal attributes necessary for the role. Prospective candidates should demonstrate a combination of educational achievements, practical experience, and personal qualities.

## Minimum Educational Requirements

Typically, VRCs are required to hold a master’s degree in fields such as:

* Rehabilitation Counseling
* Psychology
* Social Work
* Human Services

**Note: Many states have revised their educational qualifications for entry level positions.**

## Certifications

While not always mandatory, licensure or certifications such as Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credentials can significantly enhance a candidate's profile.

## Key Skills

Successful VRCs possess a mix of hard and soft skills, including:

* Interpersonal Communication: The ability to connect empathetically with clients and communicate effectively with employers.
* Analytical Thinking: Assessing clients' abilities and developing customized rehabilitation plans.
* Legislative Knowledge: Understanding of laws such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other state regulations.
* Adaptability: Navigating diverse challenges and tailoring solutions for each case.

# Strategies for Recruitment

Recruiting Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors demands a targeted and comprehensive approach to ensure the acquisition of qualified, dedicated professionals.

**VR TAC QM Assessment Tool** <https://www.vrtac-qm.org/focus-areas/program-performance-qm/vr-program-administration-management/hr>

**R&R Survey of SVRAs efforts** <https://www.csavr.org/resources>

**Directors Forum**  <https://www.csavr.org/resources>

**Minnesota VRS Presentation**  <https://www.csavr.org/resources>

**Recruitment and Retention Strategies (Jerde)** <https://www.csavr.org/resources>

**Recruitment and Retention Drs. Herbert and Yoon** <https://www.csavr.org/resources>

## Targeting Educational Institutions

Collaborating with universities and colleges that offer programs in rehabilitation counseling or related fields can yield a steady pipeline of fresh talent. Hosting job fairs, **offering internships**, and conducting **campus recruitment events** are effective strategies.

[**CACREP-RSA Award List**](https://vrtac-qm-drupal-shared-files.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/imce-files/prog-perform-qm/hr/CACREP-RSA-Awards-2024.xlsx) <https://www.vrtac-qm.org/focus-areas/program-performance-qm/vr-program-administration-management/hr>

## Utilizing Digital Platforms

Job postings on specialized online platforms like LinkedIn, Indeed, or niche boards for rehabilitation professionals can reach a broader audience. Social media campaigns can also enhance visibility.

[**SVRAs Recruitment Platforms**](https://vrtac-qm-drupal-shared-files.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/imce-files/prog-perform-qm/SVRAs-Recruitment-Platforms-9-2023.xlsx)

[**CSAVR Query – Use of social media for recruitment**](https://vrtac-qm-drupal-shared-files.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/imce-files/prog-perform-qm/CSAVR-query-Use-of-Social-Media-for-Recruitment.docx)

[**Writing compelling ads that illustrate the mission-oriented focus (NC-G)**](https://vrtac-qm-drupal-shared-files.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/site-files/prog-perform-qm/hr/06-Compelling-Ad-FACEBOOK-Example-acc.docx)

## Providing Competitive Incentives

To attract and retain top talent, VR agencies must offer attractive salaries, benefits, and opportunities for professional development. Highlighting the impact-driven nature of the role can also appeal to individuals passionate about making a difference in the lives of others.

Ensuring that recruitment practices are inclusive and non-discriminatory is vital.

**VR TAC QM Assessment Tool** <https://www.vrtac-qm.org/focus-areas/program-performance-qm/vr-program-administration-management/hr>

**2021 SVRA Salary Repository** <https://www.csavr.org/operations-and-personnel>

**CRCC Salary Report 2021**

https://crccertification.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2021-Salary-Report-FINAL.pd

**Recruitment and Stay Bonuses:** Idaho VR Example. <https://www.vrtac-qm.org/focus-areas/program-performance-qm/vr-program-administration-management/hr>

[**Use the PIMS Job Board to post openings**](https://pdp.ed.gov/RSA/Content/pdf/PIMS%20Job%20Board%20Quick%20Reference%20Guide%20for%20Employers.pdf)

# **Challenges in Recruitment**

While the demand for VRCs is growing, organizations often face challenges in attracting the right candidates.

## Shortage of Qualified Candidates

The specialized nature of the role means there may be a limited pool of individuals who meet the required qualifications and experience.

**The Top 6 Things That Employees Want in Their Next Job** (Gallup) and other articles on Recruitment Strategies: <https://www.vrtac-qm.org/focus-areas/program-performance-qm/vr-program-administration-management/hr>

## High Turnover Rates

Burnout and the emotionally intensive nature of the work can contribute to higher turnover, making retention as important as recruitment. (See the **Retention** materials.)

## Geographical Barriers

In rural or underserved areas, finding qualified professionals willing to relocate or work in those locations can be a challenge.

## Competition

Organizations must often compete with hospitals, schools, and private practices for skilled counselors, necessitating unique and compelling recruitment incentives.

## **Recommendations from the CSAVR/TAC QM Pilot Project**

* Dedicate resources (internally & externally) to the Recruitment Process.
* Adopt a hybrid work policy
* Develop a plan to make your salaries more competitive in relation to your state’s labor market.
* Review position requirements and update where needed.
* Provide multiple avenues for professional growth.
* Enhance employee engagement
* Utilize teams for process improvements

**See PowerPoint Presentation summarizing the Results and Recommendations of the CSAVR Recruitment and Retention Pilot Project below and recommendations from the Penn State University (Herbert and Yoon) study.**



