

Existing Business Policy Guide for Farmers

Vocational Rehabilitation

Developed with input from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and key stakeholder groups, the DWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Existing Business Policy guides DVR staff when working with consumers whose goal is to maintain employment through their existing business. As part of this policy, DVR may deliver services to many kinds of business owners with disabilities, including farmers.

As with other business owners who qualify under the policy, DVR may work with farmers to deliver services that assist them in maintaining their existing farm business. DVR may assist existing farm business owners with information, referral, and assistive technology services that are needed due to disability-related barriers affecting their ability to perform tasks that are essential to their job.

What You Need to Know to Receive Assistive Technology Services Under the Policy

Wage Verification

Farmers must demonstrate earning at least a minimum wage to be eligible to receive services from DVR. Under the policy, additional factors beyond federal tax returns will be considered:

- Outside income, if related to the farm business (e.g., rental income, agricultural board income, paid speaking opportunities).
- Expenses that may count as assets in subsequent financial periods (e.g., feed, equipment, farm supplies).
- Monthly cash flow (to determine the farmer's ability to pay debts and living expenses).

For farmers unable to demonstrate earnings at minimum wage or higher, the policy will allow additional opportunities to qualify for DVR services by analyzing the debt-to-asset ratio of the farm business and compare that with farms owned by individuals without disabilities.

Existing Business Policy Process

Generally, the Existing Business Policy process has ten steps which can take several months to complete. Applicants can help speed up the process by:

- Ensuring financial paperwork needed for assessing employment, earned wages, and farm finances is complete and readily available. A checklist of the paperwork that may be required is available at dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dvr/pdf/dvr-19013-p.pdf.
- Responding promptly to communications from DVR staff such as questions about documents submitted, requests for additional information like vendor equipment quotes, or requests to schedule a business walk-through. Timely responses will help move cases through the process more efficiently.

Questions? Contact: 800-442-3477 (Toll Free) or email dvr@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2025 (FFY 2025), the total amount of grant funds awarded were \$87,214,145, including \$15,522,975 reserved for Pre-Employment Transition Services. The remaining 21.3% (\$23,604,337) of the costs were funded by Wisconsin state appropriations.