

# Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)

## VR&E 101-Training for the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) Community of Practice meeting

February 23, 2023



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# OBJECTIVES

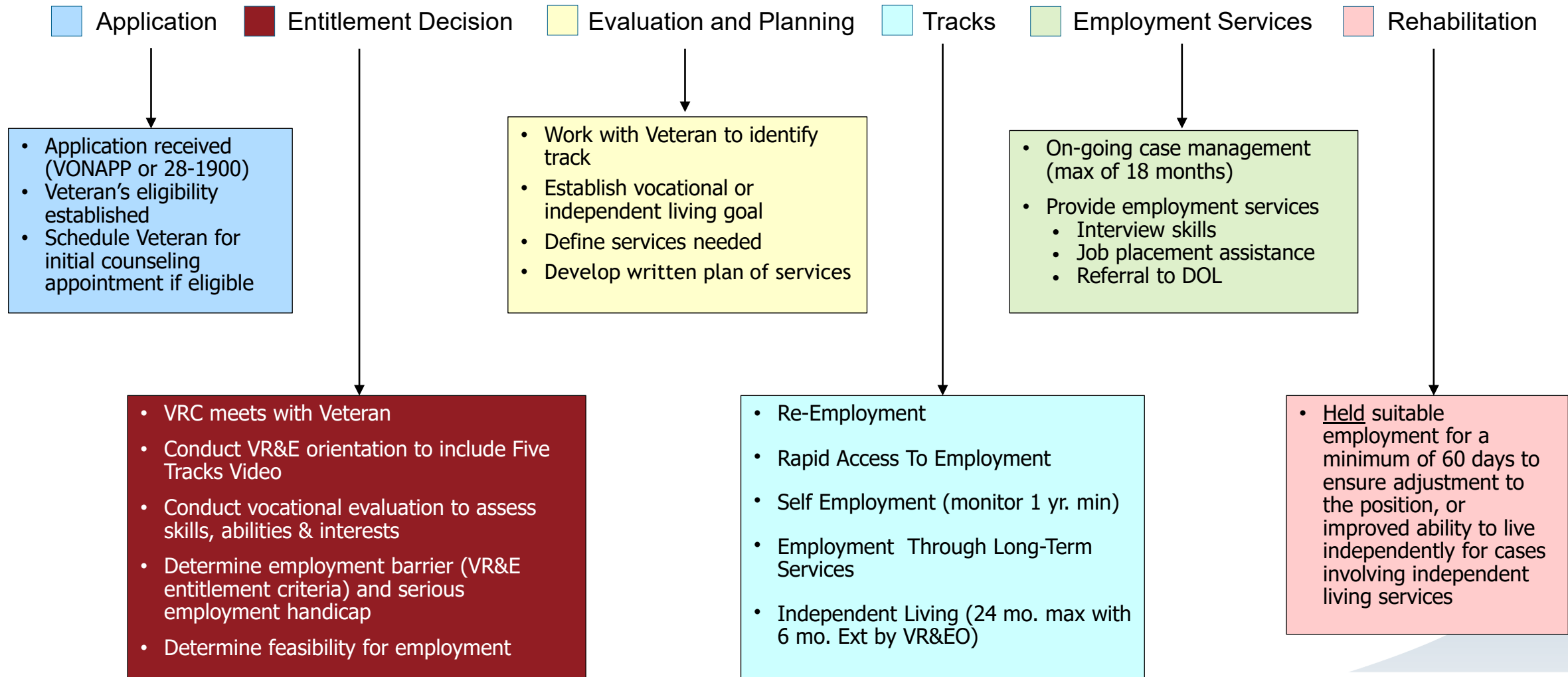
- Understand the mission and purpose of VR&E
- Provide an overview of VRE's 5 tracks to employment
- Understand types of special employment programs
- Overview of Special Hiring Authorities
- Overview of the Evaluation and Planning Process
- Understand the eligibility and entitlement process



# Veterans Readiness and Employment Mission

- The mission of Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) is to help Veterans with service-connected disabilities and an employment handicap prepare for, find, and maintain suitable employment
- For Veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VR&E provides services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible

# Chapter 31 or VR&E Process



# Entitlement, Evaluation and Planning

# Chapter 31 Eligibility and Entitlement

## Veterans

- Received honorable or other than honorable discharge
- Have a VA service-connected disability rating of:
  - 10 percent with a serious employment handicap
  - 20 percent or more with an employment handicap
- Determined by VR&E to have an employment handicap

# Chapter 31 Eligibility and Entitlement

## Active-Duty Service Members

- Expect to receive an honorable discharge
- Obtain a VA memorandum rating of 20 percent or more
- Participating in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) or have an injury or illness that prevents them from performing military duties
- Determined by VR&E to need vocational rehabilitation services

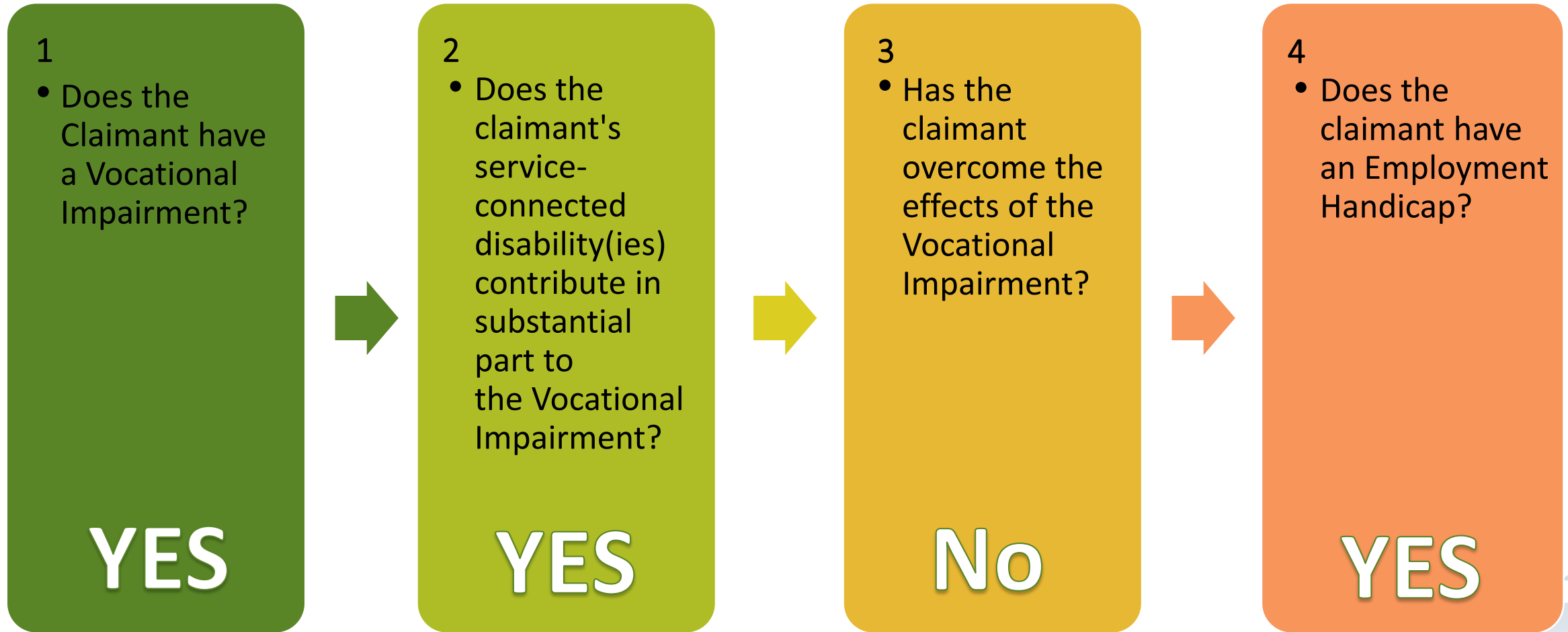
# Vocational Impairment

Equates to restrictions on employability caused by one or more of the following:

- Effects of the claimant's service-connected and non-service-connected disabilities
- Deficiencies in education and training
- Negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities
- Other pertinent factors that result in restrictions on employability or in lack of stable, continuing suitable employment
  - Examples include-homelessness, transportation, criminal background, substance abuse, childcare issues, family issues, mental and physical limitations, and financial issues.

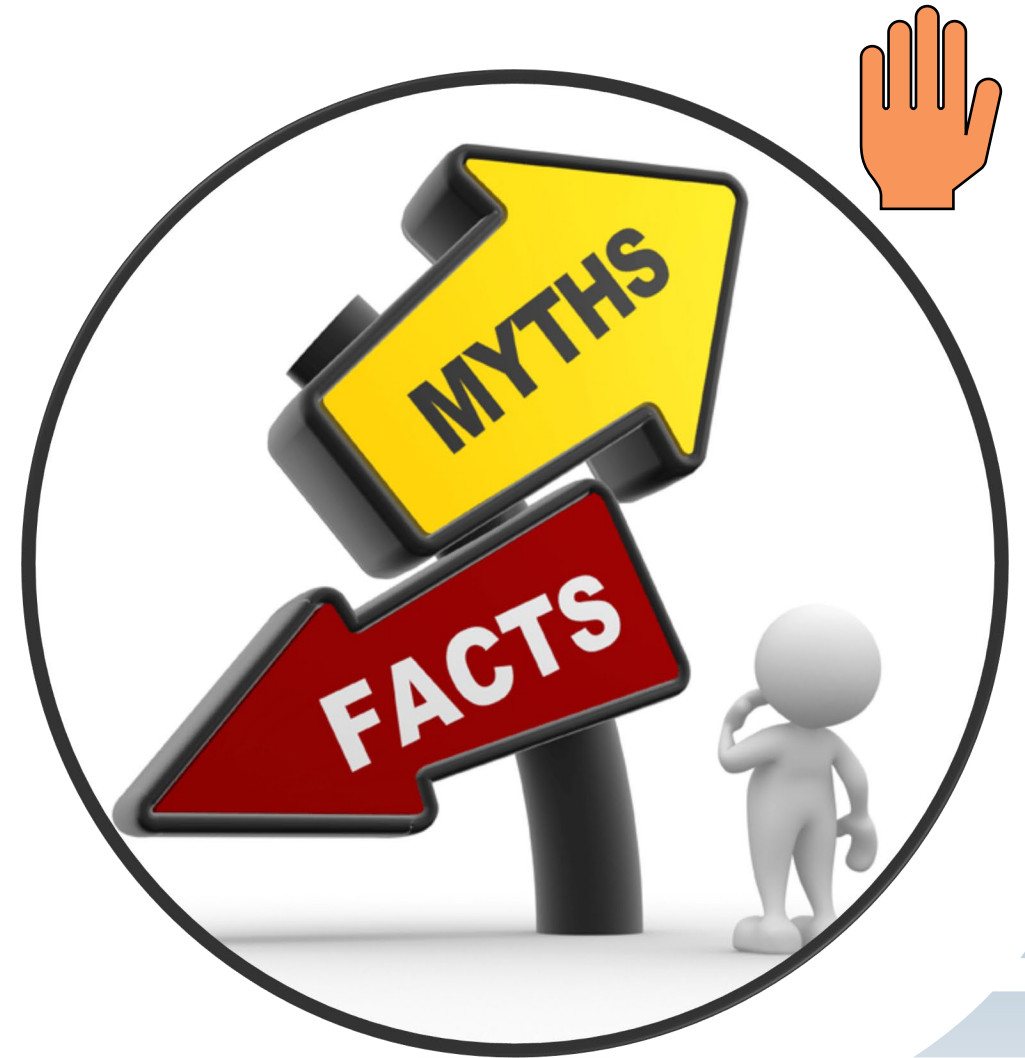
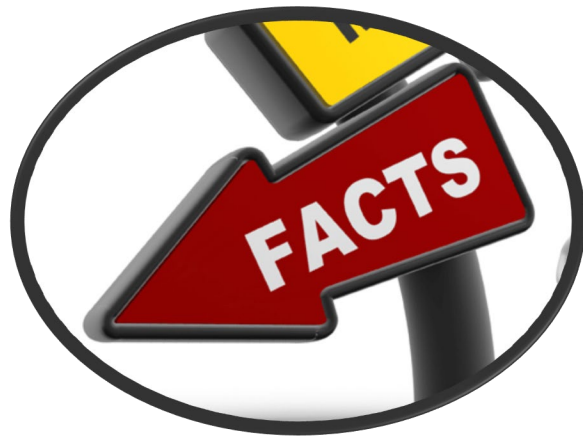


# Factors to Determining Entitlement



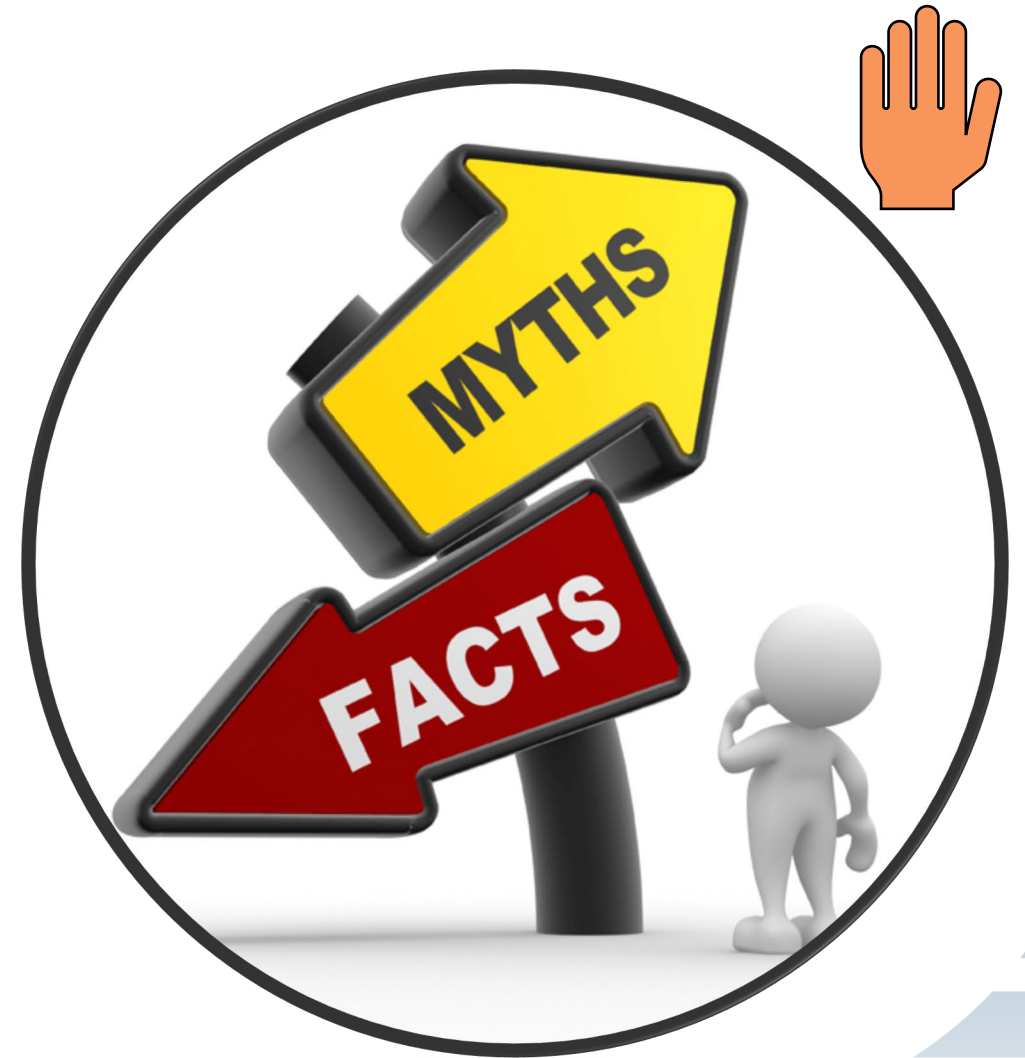
# FACT OR MYTH

If the claimant does not have a vocational impairment, the claimant is not entitled to CH 31 services provided by VR&E.

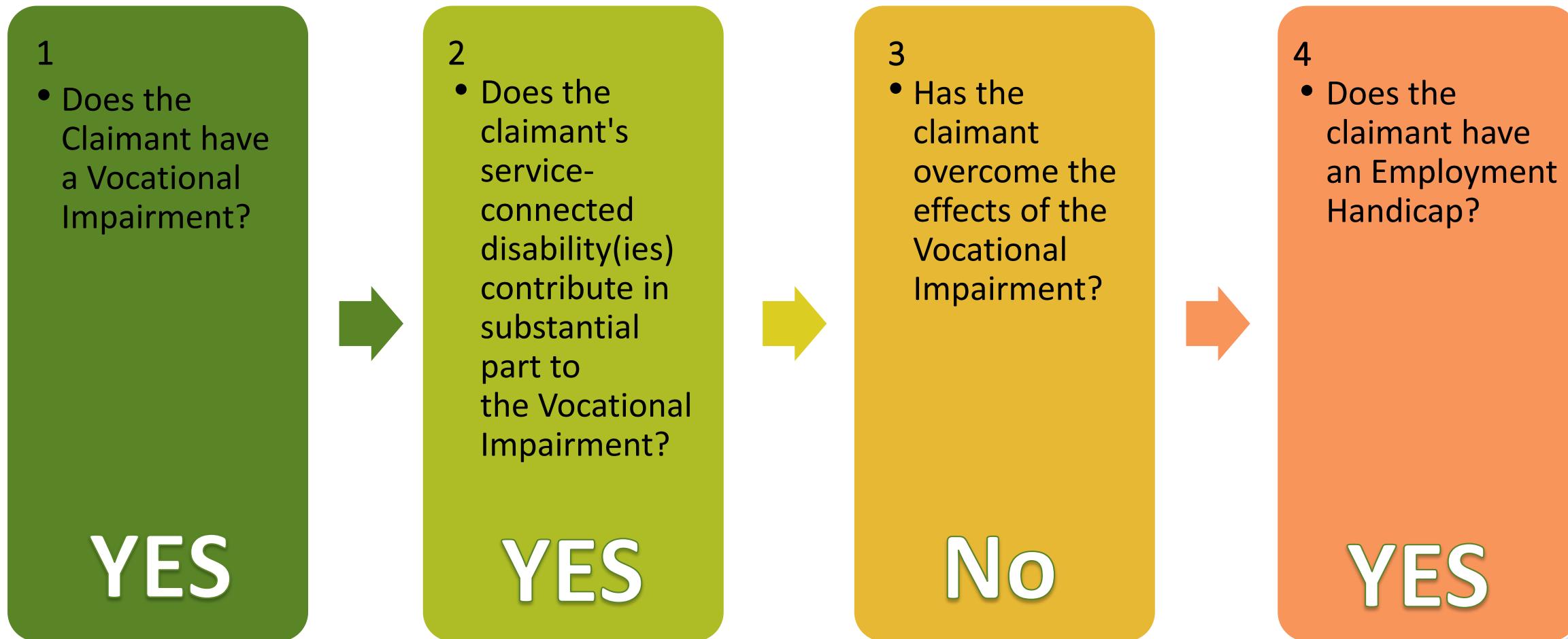


# FACT OR MYTH

The service-connected disability does not need to contribute in substantial part to the vocational impairment.



# Factors to Determining Entitlement

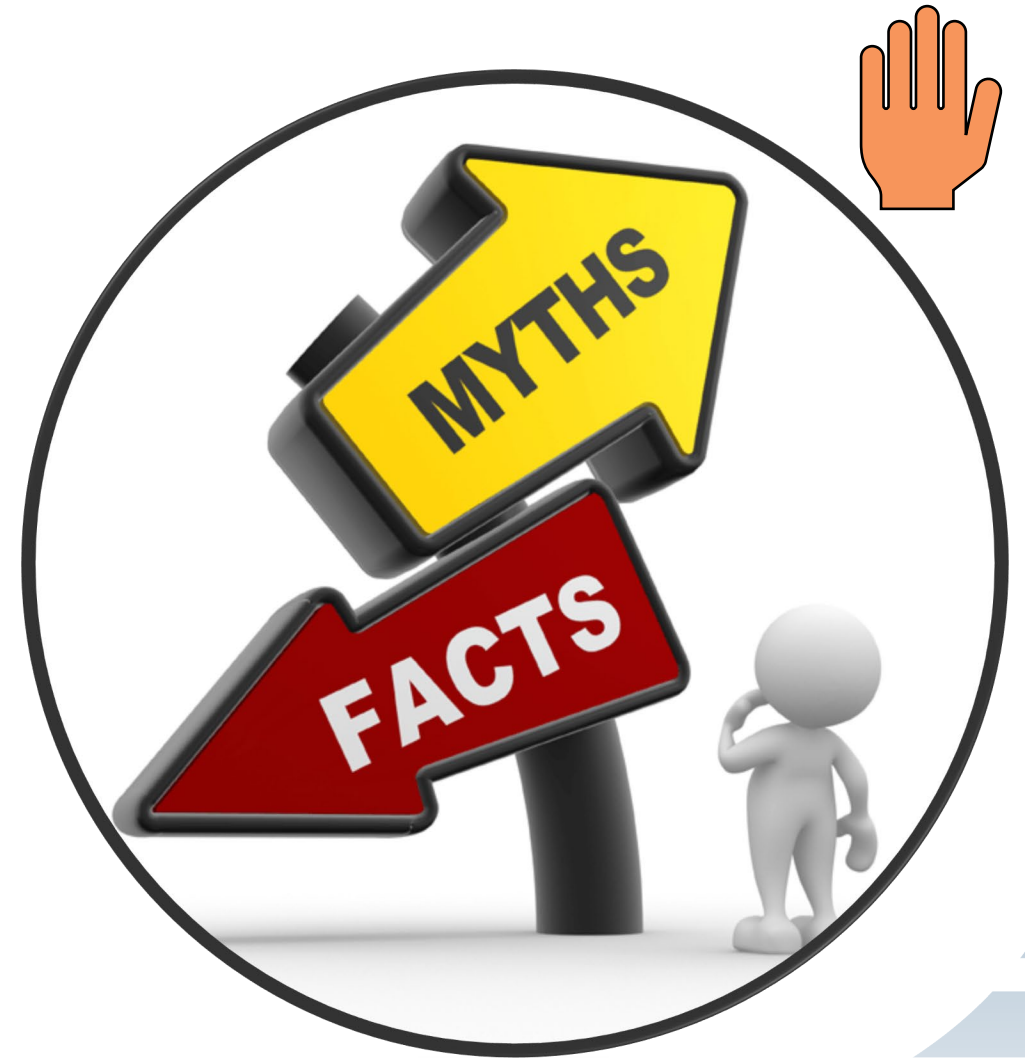


# Purpose and Scope of a Rehabilitation Plan

- Purpose: The purpose of a rehabilitation plan is to structure individualized services that will enable the VR&E participant to obtain and maintain suitable employment and/or to maximize independence in daily living.
- Scope: The scope of the plan includes the services needed to accomplish the goals of the rehabilitation plan. The objectives of the rehabilitation plan must serve to prepare the VR&E participant to achieve his or her program goals.

# FACT OR MYTH

Rehabilitation Plans are written for entry-level employment only.



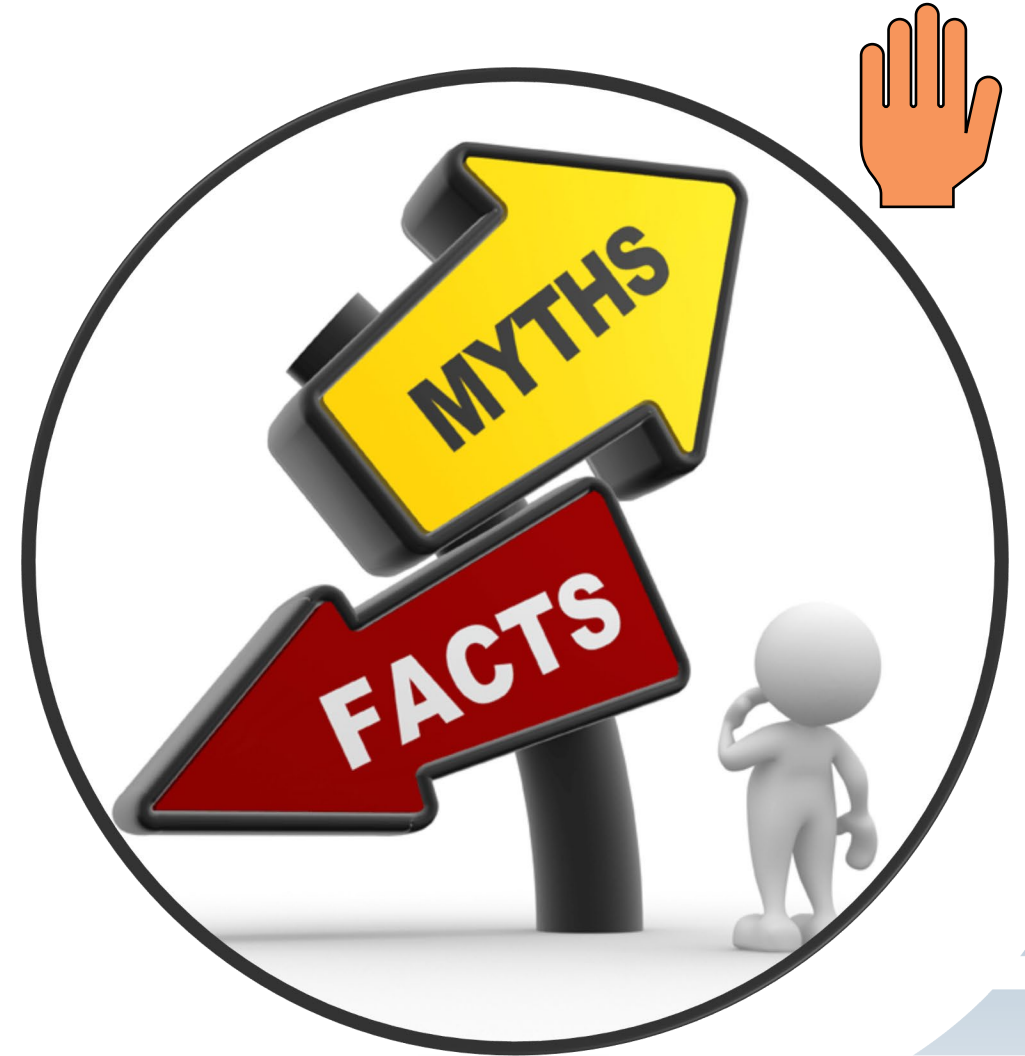
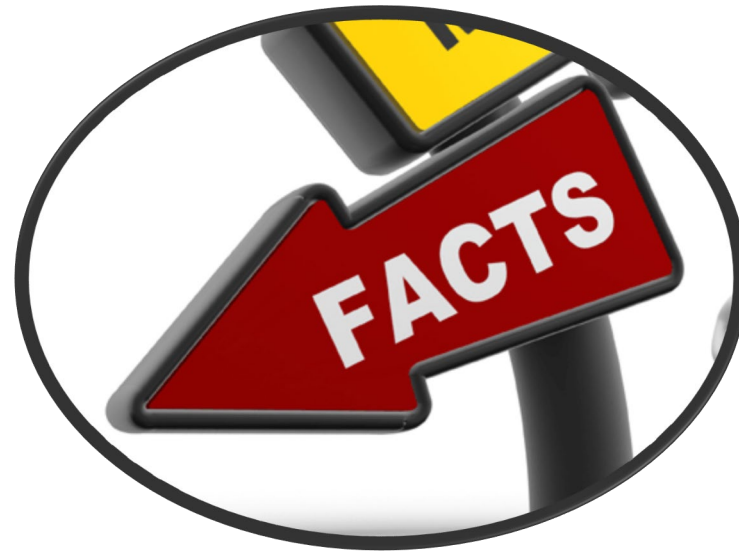
# Roles and Responsibility

- **VR&E participant:** is highly encouraged to openly and candidly discuss personal strengths, goals, limitations with disabilities, obstacles to attain their goal(s), and other pertinent information with their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) or Employment Coordinator (EC).
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor:** primary role is to assist the VR&E participant in making an informed decision on an appropriate and suitable rehabilitation goal based upon the VR&E participant's functional abilities, interests, and aptitudes, and to outline the steps needed to achieve that goal in the rehabilitation plan.
- **Employment Coordinator:** works closely with the VRC and the VR&E participant to ensure that the chosen vocational goal is viable in the local labor market in which the VR&E participant will be seeking employment.
- **VR&E Officer, Assistant VR&E Officer, Supervisory VRC:** may conduct higher-level reviews to resolve disagreements by the VR&E participant related to plan development or implementation.



# FACT OR MYTH

The VRC has the final authority on the training facility selection.



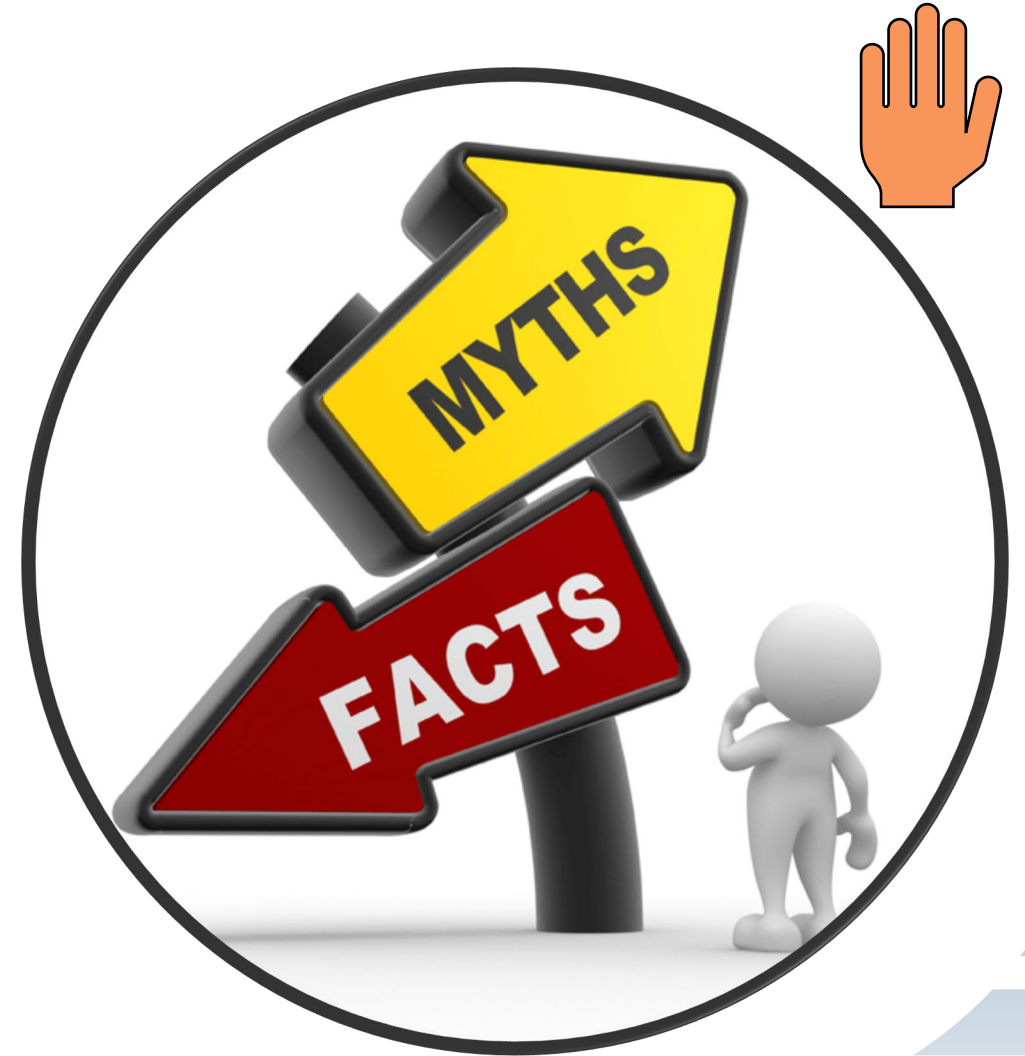


# Selection of Training Facility

- The VRC will consider the VR&E participant's preference for a particular training or rehabilitation facility.
- The cost of education and training services is one of the factors that must be considered in selecting a facility.
- The VRC and the VR&E participant must work together to identify the facility that can best meet the VR&E participant's needs.

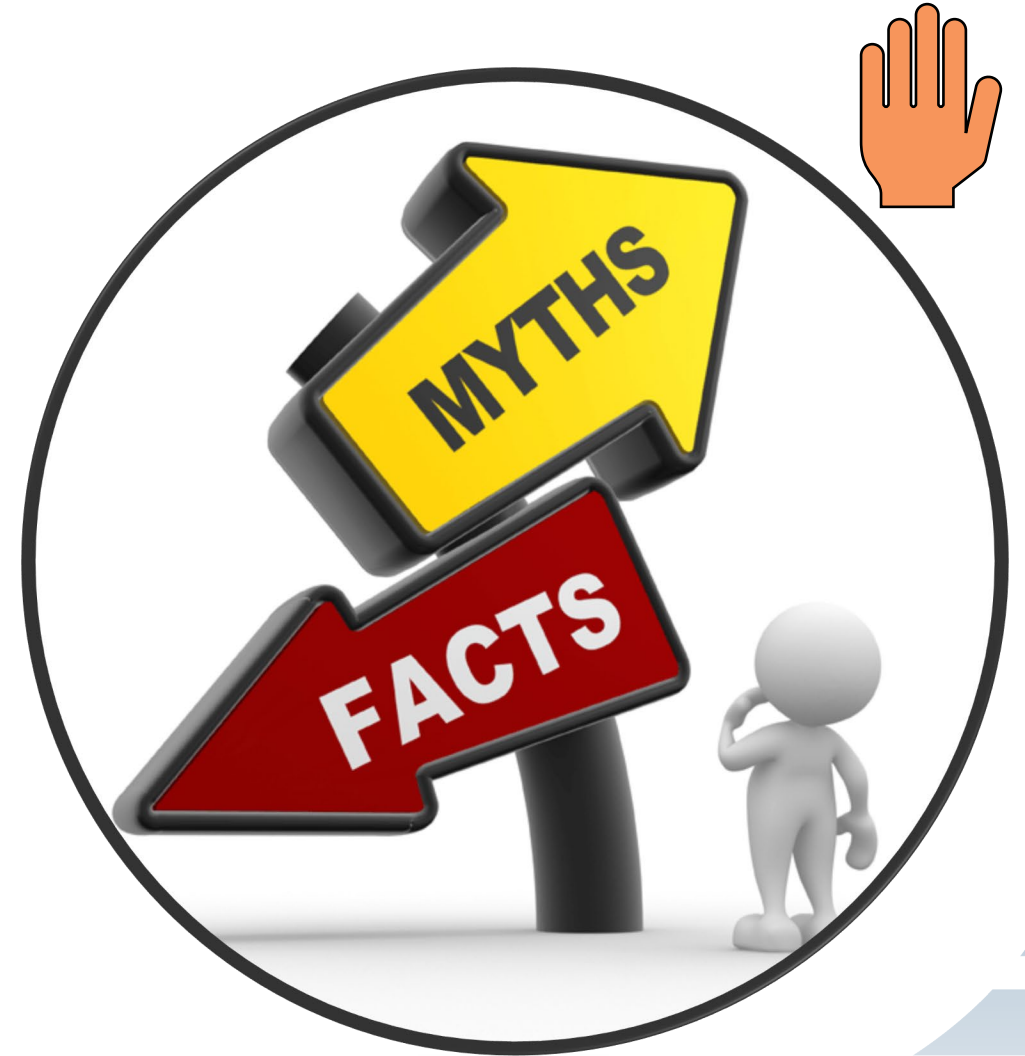
# FACT OR MYTH

There is only one VR&E plan type.



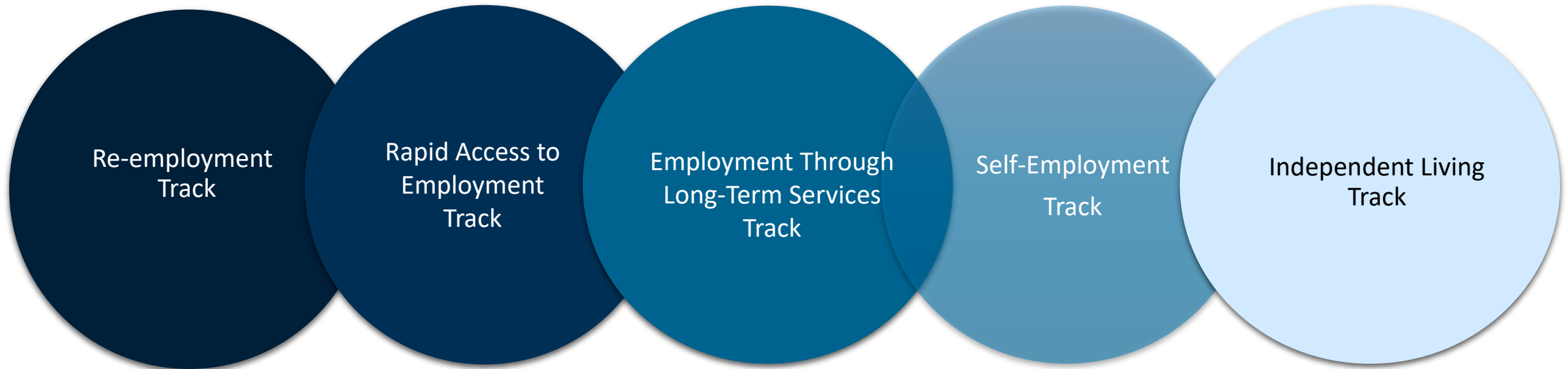
# FACT OR MYTH

A VR&E participant may use VA Education and VR&E benefits at the same time.



# VR&E Tracks to Employment

## The Five Tracks:



# Employment Services and Rehabilitation



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# VR&E Employment Services

## Special Types of Employment Services

1

- On-the-Job Training Program (OJT) and Apprenticeships

2

- Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE)
  - Although a type of Employment Service, the Veteran would revert back to training for NPWE

3

- Special Employer Incentive (SEI)

1

- On-the-Job Training Program (OJT) and Apprenticeships

## What is On-the-Job Training and What are Apprenticeships?

- Both provide training for specific positions with the employer
- Veteran is hired at the trainee wage
- Results in permanent full-time employment
- Apprenticeships also have a formal training module

- Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE)

- Although a type of employment service, the Veteran would revert back to training for NPWE

## What is Non-Paid Work Experience?

- Provides eligible VR&E participants with practical work experiences
- Placement can be at any government facility that will provide the participant with work experience consistent with their vocational rehabilitation goals and does not aggravate their disabilities
- Usually lasts six months, but can go up to a year
- There is no cost to the employer; the VR&E participant receives a subsistence allowance from the VA



- Special Employer Incentive (SEI)

## What is the Special Employer Incentive Program?

- The SEI program assists Veterans who face extraordinary obstacles in obtaining employment
- Veterans are hired by participating employers (can not be with governmental employer)
- Reimbursement up to 50% may be authorized for a maximum of six (6) months
- Payment to the employer may be monthly or in one lump sum



# How VR&E Employment Coordinators Can Help

VA's Employment Coordinators can assist employers in accessing Veteran talent nationwide. By partnering with VR&E Service, employers will receive assistance in meeting their staffing and workforce needs, managing their relationships with local VR&E offices, the employer's local offices, and the Veteran talent pool.

# Special Hiring Authorities for Federal Employment




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## VRA

**Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)** is an excepted authority that allows an agency to non-competitively appoint an eligible veteran (up to and including a GS-11). If you:

- Served during a war or are in receipt of a campaign badge for service in a campaign or expedition; **OR**
- are a disabled Veteran (therefore all VR&E Veterans), **OR**
- are in receipt of an Armed Forces Service Medal (includes the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal) for participation in a military operation, **OR**
- are a recently separated Veteran (within 3 years of discharge), **AND**
- separated under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge).



## 30% or More Disabled Veteran

The 30% or More Disabled Veteran authority allows an agency to non-competitively appoint any Veteran with a 30% or more service-connected disability.

Veterans are eligible if they:

- retired from active military service with a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more; **OR**
- have a rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs showing a compensable service-connected disability of 30% or more.

## VEOA

The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998, as amended (VEOA) provides preference eligible and certain eligible veterans the opportunity to compete for certain positions announced under an agency's merit promotion procedures. It applies only when the agency is filling a permanent, competitive service position and has decided to solicit candidates from outside its own workforce. It allows eligible veterans and preference eligible to apply to announcements that would otherwise be open to so called "status" candidates, i.e., "current competitive service employees and certain prior employees who have earned competitive status."

To be eligible to be considered pursuant to VEOA appointment, your **latest**, discharge must be issued under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge), **AND** you must be either:

- a preference eligible, **OR**
- a Veteran who substantially completed 3 or more years of active service under honorable conditions.



## Disabled Veterans Enrolled in a VA Training Program

Veterans with disabilities are eligible for training under the VA VR&E program may enroll for training or work experience at an agency under the terms of an agreement between the agency and VA. While enrolled in the VA program, the Veteran is **not a Federal employee** for most purposes but is a beneficiary of the VA.

Training is tailored to the individual's needs and goals, so there is no set length. If the training is intended to prepare the individual for eventual appointment in the agency rather than just provide work experience, the agency must focus the training on enabling the Veteran to meet the qualification requirements for the position.

Upon successful completion, the host agency and VA give the Veteran a Certificate of Training showing the occupational series and grade level of the position for which trained. **The Certificate of Training allows any agency to appoint the Veteran noncompetitively under a status quo appointment which may be converted to career or career-conditional at any time.**



## Other Special Hiring Authorities

- Schedule A Appointing Authority for People with Certain Disabilities
- Pathways
  - Internship
  - Recent Graduates Program
  - Presidential Management Fellows Program

Additional Information: [USAJOBS.gov](https://USAJOBS.gov) and  
[Feds Hire Vets - Veterans - Job Seekers - Special Hiring Authorities](#)



# Questions

