



College of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals

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cvrp.net

The mandate of the **College of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals** is to protect the public and establish the minimum requirement of competency and certification. The primary function of the College is to ensure Registrants are qualified, competent, and following clearly defined standards of practice and ethics.

The College of Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals is an international, self-regulatory body for the vocational rehabilitation (VR) profession. The College is responsible for protecting the public by setting and enforcing standards, guidelines and governing the conduct of our professional Registrants. The College will uphold the quality of accredited VR professionals and act on behalf of a member of the public who is concerned about the vocational rehabilitation and return-to-work services they have or have not received.

What does the College Do?

- Exists to protect the public from incompetent and unqualified practitioners through certification.
- Ensures vocational rehabilitation practice excellence through Standards of Practice and a Disciplinary process.
- Ensures ongoing member competency through annual registration and mandated continuing education.
- Meets the standards of other professionally regulated Colleges.
- Is an independent, not-for-profit, federal corporation with national registration.
- Is governed by a Board of Directors.

A VR professional assesses, evaluates, and identifies persons who are experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) a vocational disability or disadvantage. A VR professional seeks to develop and execute vocational rehabilitation and return-to-work (RTW) plans designed to achieve or restore optimum vocational and avocational outcomes. These outcomes are achieved through the application of knowledge, skills, interventions, and strategies that are unique to the discipline and the VR profession.

History of Vocational Rehabilitation

Dr. Garry Corbett, CDMP, CVRP(D), CCVE(D), VRAC(F), CVRP Public Director

Of all the helping professions, Vocational Rehabilitation in Canada has had perhaps the most colourful yet misunderstood history. Born out of the ravages of war it has seen periods of significant growth and other times of decline.

Prior to the early 1900's vocational rehabilitation (i.e., services provided to assist disabled workers enter, stay in or re-enter employment) was largely left to families, churches and the community. If a person was born with a disability or became disabled, they either had to fend for themselves or rely on the assistance of family or friends.

The "official" start of our profession can be traced back 95 years to the *Soldiers Rehabilitation Act of 1918*¹. This Act was the first and only time that a profession was created by an Act of Congress. It created a Federal Board of Vocational Education with the authority and responsibility for vocational rehabilitation of disabled veterans returning from World War I.

At about the same time in Canada, the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment (created by an Order in Council) was charged with the monumental responsibilities of administering "hospital and medical for the sick and wounded, set pensions, select appropriate training programs and finance settlement

¹ https://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels2/four/rehab_act/rehab1.html



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loans". The focus of the Vocational Branch of the Invalid Soldiers' Commission, Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment (DSCR)² was to facilitate community re-entry and to provide vocational training for returning soldiers who had lost their former pre-war positions due to a disability. The program had three parts: employment, retraining and medical services. Retraining includes 1) Ward Occupations and 2) Curative workshops and 3) Industrial Retraining.

Over the following years most of the development of the Vocational Rehabilitation profession occurred in the United States and other parts of the world. In 1920 the United States Congress passed the *Civilian Rehabilitation Act*³ which provided rehabilitation programs for all Americans with disabilities patterned after the Soldiers Rehabilitation Act. It established the Federal-State program in rehabilitation and provided funding to states (50/50 match) for primarily vocational services: vocational guidance, training, occupational adjustment, prosthetics, and placement services; only for persons with physical disabilities. It did not include physical restoration or social orientation rehabilitation. In 1943, the *Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments Act*⁴ expanded services to also include mental health and mental retardation.

Unfortunately, Canada did not immediately follow suit in the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation services to all disabled citizens. However, there was an unprecedented expansion of programs dealing with individuals with disabilities followed World War II. These were prompted by a series of social movements, each building on the advances of predecessors. All had as their aim, in one form or another, the inclusion of disabled people as valued members in community life. Disabled veterans were the first to press their case. Their central aim to secure rehabilitation services as close to their home communities as possible (rather than in large veterans' hospitals) and in a way that would prepare them for community life. This led to development of early rehabilitation programs and services, integrating both medical and social approaches. These forces led to the first federal-provincial conference on disability in 1952 in which agreement was reached on cost sharing of vocational rehabilitation services by federal and provincial governments. The incentive of federal funds contributed to a rapid expansion in employment and training programs for disabled adults of working age across Canada.

A second federal-provincial conference on disability in 1964, this one on "mental retardation", again, contributed to a rapid expansion of community-based resources and opportunities. Special funding was provided for a series of demonstration projects and financing of community services was made possible through a new federal-provincial cost-sharing mechanism called the *Canada Assistance Plan*⁵. In the 1970's, the same association again prompted a nationwide series of demonstration projects, this time to place the emphasis on individual services leading to community inclusion – the main idea of which was adopted by provincial governments, across Canada by the mid 1980's.

In the United States, vocational rehabilitation services proved to be such a success working with disabled clients (\$7 returned to taxes for every \$1 put into the program) that President Lyndon Johnson and the United States government expanded the definition of "disabled" to include a wide variety of clients not previously served by the profession. Suddenly the term Disability included drug abuse, alcoholism, repeated jail sentences, so-called Behavior Disorders, public assistance, and many other conditions that were not medical at all. In short, almost anyone who could not get a job could get help from VR. Vocational Rehabilitation professionals were operating offices in prisons, welfare offices, and storefronts. Where the VR system had once served thousands of people, it now served tens of thousands. Unfortunately, this proved to be an abysmal failure. What had been a shining success quickly turned into a fiasco and almost destroyed the credibility the profession had garnered over its first 50 years of existence. By this time - in the late sixties and seventies - people with disabilities, advocates, and family members had learned a few lessons from the civil rights movement. They began lobbying and protesting about, among other things, this streamlining of VR. In

² <https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/history/after-the-war/veterans/civilian-reintegration/>

³ https://www.jstor.org/stable/1822201?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

⁴ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41817855>

⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/federal-transfers/history-health-social-transfers.html>



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1973 Congress responded with a completely new *Rehabilitation Act*⁶. This act directed VR to primarily serve people with significant physical or mental disabilities. The Government passed the United States Code Title 29 Section 16 which defines Vocational Rehabilitation services as: any services described in an individualized plan for employment necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual. In 1983 the International Labour Organization (oldest United Nations Department) passed Convention 159 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons). In this document they defined the “purpose of vocational rehabilitation as being to enable a disabled person to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment and thereby to further such person’s integration or reintegration into society.” This Convention specifically called on all members of the United Nations to support the work of Vocational Rehabilitation and the assistance the profession provides to disabled individuals.

Even though Canada has not had a history of enacted legislation supporting the profession there has been a concerted effort by the Federal and Provincial Governments over the years to support the goal of assisting disabled individuals enter or re-enter the labour market. One of the leading advocates for vocational rehabilitation has continued throughout the years to be Canada’s Veterans Affairs. Their Vocational Rehabilitation program is designed to provide aid to disabled veterans in transferring skills they gained in the military to jobs in civilian life. When necessary, training is available to support this move. Many of the costs related to training or schooling are covered under this program, including childcare. The Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Reestablishment and Compensation Act defines Vocational Rehabilitation as: “any process designed to identify and achieve an appropriate occupational goal for a person with a physical or mental health problem, given the state of their health and the extent of their education, skills and experience.” Another proponent of our profession has been the Canada Pension Plan Disability Vocational Rehabilitation Program. This program has been designed to assist disabled individuals who are receiving CPP to re-enter the work force. Supports are provided for the individual to receive prevocational counselling, job search assistance and benefit support. As was stated at the beginning this is a very short overview of the history of Vocational Rehabilitation. These few paragraphs have only touched the surface of the very rich and diverse history of our profession. However, even though this has been very abbreviated it should be clear that what makes our profession unique is that our service is effective in assisting disabled individuals move towards full integration into society specifically when the focus is on vocational goals.

VRAC and CVRP’s Evolution

VRA Canada researched regulation for 20 years. In 2000 VRA Canada had a national regulation committee to research regulatory options for the profession.

- **2002** - VRAC national AGM in Ottawa, the Executive Director’s report to the membership referenced that VRA Ontario and British Columbia Societies had a joint committee exploring regulatory options
- **2008** - VRAC national board’s past president provided updates to VRAC’s board regarding efforts towards regulation. VRA Ontario had a regulation committee and integrated a consultant to the Society. VRAC Rehab Matters national newsmagazine’s summer and fall 2009 editions VRA Ontario provided an update on regulatory effort
- **2009** - VRA BC Society AGM Treasurer’s report indicated funds have been designated for future regulation needs.
- **2010** - VRAC Rehab Matters spring and summer 2010 editions VRA Ontario provided an update on regulatory efforts. VRAC’s Summer 2010 edition of the Voice newsletter was dedicated to the College. “*The College Is Here*”. The newsletter covered topics including what is the College: certifications, application processes, and frequently asked questions. VRA Canada’s Rehab Matters fall 2010 edition,

⁶ [https://ca.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/1-507-0228?transitionType=Default&contextData=\(sc.Default\)&firstPage=true](https://ca.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/1-507-0228?transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)&firstPage=true)



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- Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, ICBC – accepted as a VR Professional under the *Insurance Act of New Brunswick enacted May 1, 2021*
- Insurance Act of New Brunswick
- Government of New Brunswick
- Court of Queen’s Bench, New Brunswick
- Manitoba Public Insurance – in consultation

Certifications

Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Professional, **CVRP**

Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Professional Transferable Skills Analysis, **CVRP TSA**

Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Professional Provisional, **CVRP(P)**

Canadian Certified Vocational Evaluator, **CCVE**

Canadian Certified Vocational Evaluator Provisional, **CCVE(P)**

International Certified Vocational Evaluator, **ICVE**

Return to Work Disability Manager, **RTWDM**

Laddering Diplomate and Fellow

Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Professional Fellow, **CVRP(F)**

Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Professional Diplomate, **CVRP(D)**

Canadian Certified Vocational Evaluator Fellow, **CCVE(F)**

Canadian Certified Vocational Evaluator Diplomate, **CCVE(D)**

All certification admissibility is evaluated through stringent pre-screening guidelines, peer reviews, Board approved online examinations and mentoring programs for provisional applicants.

Certification Compliance

Annual declaration application adhering to CVRP Standards of Practice, [VRAC Code of Ethics](#) and Errors & Omissions/Liability Insurance.

Biennial submission of Continuing Education Units accredited under [Vocational Rehabilitation](#) and [Vocational Evaluation](#) domains of learning and core competencies.

Quinquennial submission of Vulnerable Police Check/Police Check.