

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services/advocacy/consumer-involve/home-based-and-self-employment-guide.html>

## **Home-Based and Self-Employment Guide**

*Home-Based and Self-Employment Guide for MRC Consumers*

*A Discussion for People who use the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Services*

“Vocational rehabilitation services assist people with significant disabilities to return to or start a meaningful career. In assessing abilities, experiences and training, a certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will help you make an informed choice of career goal. You and your counselor may also consider training and any assistive technologies needed to support your chosen career objectives. Your decisions are written into an individualized plan for employment (IPE.) The IPE forms an agreement between you as a consumer of vocational rehabilitation services, and the MRC as a provider of those services.”

### **What is the Difference Between Home-Based and Self-Employment?**

Home-based employment means working for an employer from your home. This arrangement takes place upon the mutual agreement of the employer and employee; and includes provisions typically found in the workplace. These may include benefits, supervision, time requirements, output requirements, equipment or procedure requirements, etc. Examples of home-based employment include "help-desk" staff, call center work, word processing, reservations agent, computer operator, medical and legal transcription, programming, and/or professional, advisory and managerial work, etc.

Self-employment means owning a business and working for oneself. Some examples of such business opportunities are manufacturing, distribution, retailing, sales, marketing, advertising, publishing and franchising. Other options might be providing business services, such as computer work or consulting as an independent entrepreneur. As a business owner, you may have the option of working from home, a store or at some other location. The key difference from home-based employment is that you are not an employee of someone else. An interesting option is to provide paid services in your vocational field [professional, managerial, executive] to business and government agencies with an objective of future employment by demonstrating your capabilities as a consultant or contractor.

An alternative definition of self-employment is: "To be self-employed means controlling your own work; To earn ones living by working independently of an employer, either by freelance or by running a business."

## WHAT CAN THE MRC DO FOR ME?

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) has a Public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program for individuals with disabilities who want to go to work. Self-employment is one of the options for consumers seeking employment services through the MRC.

The MRC may provide the following as part of its VR service to you:

- Counseling & Guidance
- Diagnostic Evaluations
- Interest and Aptitude Testing
- College or Vocational Training
- Skills Training

The MRC also has contracts with outside sources to provide you with other services, if appropriate such as:

- Professional consultation to assist you to evaluate the feasibility of your business idea.
- Professional consultation to help you prepare your Business Plan.
- Specialized training services to help you in developing basic entrepreneurial skills.
- Assistance to explore funding sources.
- Financial support, subject to regulations, for equipment and initial stocks and supplies.
- Follow-up (post-employment) services to assure the business venture stays on track.
- Other appropriate goods and services; for example, developing and implementing marketing plans.