

Informed Choice



What is Informed Choice?

You have come to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) for assistance in preparing for a job or training, or finding a job. As you work with DORS staff, you will make many decisions affecting your career and life, such as:

- What kind of work fits your interests and abilities
- What you need to get that type of job
- What help you need to keep the job

DORS staff will help you explore your options and the pros and cons of each option. You will then be able to make good decisions leading to employment. This is "informed choice."

There may be times when, because of policy or funding issues, DORS may not be able to pay for a specific choice you would like to make. However, your preferences should always be an important part of planning your rehabilitation program.

What You Need To Fully Consider:

- You – your strengths, needs, preferences, priorities, concerns, and hopes as they relate to employment.
- The Job Market – accurate information about employment trends and opportunities, employer needs and expectations, and job duties and requirements.
- Resources – information regarding community resources and programs which can assist you in preparing for employment or reaching your employment goal.
- DORS – information about DORS policies and procedures as they relate to your preferences, needs, and employment goal.

Your DORS counselor is there to guide and assist you in identifying and considering all of these factors. You are welcome to invite a support person(s) to meetings with DORS staff.

Important Opportunities to Make Informed Choice

DORS consumers have the right to participate fully from the beginning to the end of your vocational rehabilitation process, including when you:

- Plan for types of assessments and evaluations.
- Develop employment options and select an employment goal.
- Decide what steps are needed in order to reach your employment goal.

- Choose who will provide rehabilitation services, goods, and assessments.
- Develop your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or your Pre-Employment Transition Services Agreement.
- Plan how your financial contribution, if any, will be applied to your services.
- Identify types of jobs to consider and select from available job offers.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) confirms that students with disabilities who may not have applied or been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services have the right to exercise informed choice in regards to the receipt of limited Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Advocacy and the Appeals Process

Throughout the rehabilitation process, you will have opportunities to discuss your options and choices with DORS staff. If you are not able to come to agreement, you may contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to assist you in communicating your point of view and negotiating with DORS. You can reach a CAP specialist by calling 1-800-638-6243.

If you have a concern about any decision made by DORS, you may talk with your counselor the office supervisor, other DORS management staff, and/or request assistance through CAP.

You have the right to request a formal appeal by submitting your concerns in writing, within 60 days of the decision, to:

Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services
2301 Argonne Drive
Baltimore MD 21218

Formal appeals are heard through the Office of Administrative Hearings. If both parties involved agree, there is an option to pursue a formal mediation process to assist in settling any dispute. Additional information regarding the appeal process can be requested through your counselor or CAP.

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Toll free: 1-888-554-0334
TTY: 410-554-9411
Website: www.dors.maryland.gov

