

Maryland State Department of Education  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**  
**Important Information About**  
**DORS Employment Services**

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) partners with people with disabilities to help them prepare for, achieve, and keep employment, and their independence.

## **General Terms and Conditions**

The vocational rehabilitation (VR) employment services DORS can provide depend on the availability of State and Federal funds and on openings at community providers and schools which provide the services needed. DORS services are based on the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

DORS bases its rates of financial assistance on the cost of the least expensive service, which meets the employment needs of the person, with consideration of their informed choice. **DORS will only pay for services that have been pre-approved and authorized in writing by a DORS official.**

All DORS services, except for assessments, vocational counseling, referral and placement services, and DORS teachers for the visually impaired, are subject to a Financial Need policy and are reviewed annually. Recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are eligible for DORS services and do not have to have financial reviews. The Financial Need policy applies to all individuals eligible for the Independent Living (IL) program, including those who receive SSI or SSDI.

## Order of Selection

Due to limited resources, DORS employment services are provided according to a federally mandated Order of Selection policy which gives priority to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

## Informed Choice

DORS counselors provide information about various options and resources throughout the employment process. All individuals are encouraged to fully participate in the selection of goals, services, and providers. See the [Informed Choice Fact Sheet](#) provided by your DORS counselor for more information.

## Verification of Employment and Earnings

DORS is required by the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal regulations to report to the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration about DORS' fulfillment of State plan requirements and provision of employment services.

To meet this reporting requirement, DORS may use the name and Social Security number of consumers to obtain verification of employment and earnings information from any of the following sources: Maryland Department of Labor, the State Wage Interchange System, the Federal Employment Data Exchange System, The Work Number, or other sources as appropriate. **This information will not be used for any other purpose.**

## Rights of the Individual

Applicants for and recipients of DORS services have the following rights:

- **Confidentiality** – All information given to or obtained by DORS staff will be used only for the individual's employment services and in the administration of the DORS program. Information may be released for purposes of the individual's employment program, and if required by Federal Law and in response to legal investigations and judicial orders. Information requested about an individual from DORS for any other purpose shall be released only with the written consent of the individual.
- **Client Assistance Program (CAP)** – CAP staff can give advice and provide information and assistance as individuals work with DORS and service providers. CAP staff work with individuals and DORS staff to help resolve concerns and problems. They can also offer assistance with mediation and the Appeal Process when concerns cannot be resolved at a lower level. CAP staff may be reached by calling 410-554-9361 or 1-800-638-6243.
- **Conflict Resolution** – If individuals believe they have not been treated fairly or provided with appropriate services by DORS, they may ask for help, either on their own or with assistance from CAP, in the following ways:
  - **DORS Staff Review** – The individual may request a meeting with their counselor and the counselor's supervisor to discuss the problem and seek a solution.
  - **Appeal Process** – If an individual is dissatisfied with decisions made by DORS staff which affect their VR employment services program, the individual has the right to an Appeal Hearing with an impartial Hearing Officer. If both parties agree, they may participate in mediation prior to the scheduled date of the Appeal Hearing.

All requests for an Appeal Hearing must be in writing to the Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services, 2301 Argonne Drive, Baltimore, MD 21218, filed within 60 days of being notified of DORS' action with which the individual disagrees, and includes the individual's address and phone number.

Consistent with State regulations, hearings are scheduled with the Office of Administrative Hearings. Randomly selected Administrative Law Judges trained in rehabilitation issues act as impartial hearing officers. Appeals are heard within 60 days of receipt of the written appeal request.

See the [CAP Fact Sheet](#) provided by your DORS counselor for more information.

## **Other Important Rights**

- DORS and its vendors do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, age, national origin, residence, physical or mental disability or political affiliation in providing access to services.
- Individuals must fully participate in the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), Independent Living Plan (ILP) or Trial Work Plan, including the selection of services and providers.
- The individual's progress toward employment will be reviewed regularly. An annual review will be conducted to determine their continued eligibility. Individuals will be given an opportunity to review their employment program and, if necessary, jointly redevelop and agree to its terms.

- Individuals have the right to be informed of any significant delay in the provision of employment services.
- Individuals have the right to review the information in their record of services after signing a release of information statement.

## **Responsibilities of the Individual**

Individuals have the following responsibilities:

- To provide DORS staff with accurate information about their disability, limitations, capabilities, education, work experience, and other related matters.
- To fully participate in the selection of assessments, goals, services, and providers of services.
- To fully participate in their employment program.
- To maintain regular contact with their DORS counselor and to keep all appointments scheduled with persons involved in their employment program.
- To cooperate in using other community services when they can be of help in the employment program.
- To maintain satisfactory performance and regular attendance if in a training program.
- If pursuing higher education, to:
  - Apply for Financial Aid annually.

- Complete at least 75% of credits for which they are enrolled and maintain a minimum average grade of “C” or its equivalent on all credits completed each semester/grading period.
- Discuss with their DORS counselor and obtain approval for a change of major or course of study.
- Submit a copy of the grade report to their DORS counselor upon the completion of each semester/grading period.
- To participate financially in the employment program as indicated by the DORS Financial Need policy.

## **Social Security SSI/SSDI Beneficiaries**

- Individuals receiving Social Security disability benefits are encouraged to use benefits planning services to learn how working may affect your benefits. Your DORS counselor will include benefits planning services on your Individualized Plan for Employment, and refer you to a SSA-trained expert known as a Benefits Planner.

Please refer to the *Benefits Planning for SSI/SSDI Beneficiaries Fact Sheet* provided by your DORS counselor for more information.

- If you receive Social Security disability benefits and are between age 18 and 64, you likely have a “Ticket to Work” from SSA. This Ticket can be assigned to DORS or to an Employment Network which may coordinate and provide appropriate services to help you find and maintain employment.

See the *Ticket to Work Fact Sheet* provided by your DORS counselor for more information.