

Six Steps to Vocational Rehabilitation



Customer Handbook

MRS *PROMOTING
ABILITIES*

Michigan Rehabilitation Services

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***MRS Mission Statement:
MRS partners with
individuals and employers
to achieve quality
employment outcomes
and independence
for individuals with
disabilities.***



Welcome to Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)

MRS partners with individuals and employers to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence for individuals with disabilities.

This handbook is designed to answer your questions about our services.

Welcome and thank you for contacting our agency.

Purpose of MRS

Our purpose is to help people with disabilities get and keep a suitable job. If you are eligible, a vocational rehabilitation counselor will:

- work with you to identify an appropriate job goal
- help you decide the services needed to become job ready, and
- help with your job search

It is important to remember that any services provided must support your job goal.

About Our Staff

Our trained counselors help about 7,000 Michigan residents find employment each year. Our counselors come from different backgrounds. They have education and training in:

- career counseling
- vocational evaluation
- job placement
- community resources, and
- other areas related to employment

Rehabilitation aides, job placement specialists, and other support staff assist counselors in providing services to you.

Our counselors look forward to helping you achieve the job goal that is a good match for you.



What is Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling?



“I would like to express my sincere thanks to my counselor and to your agency. Never before have I been treated with such dignity, respect, and consideration. She has bent over backwards to help me. She has found information for me through other agencies, she acted as an advocate when I really needed someone to help clarify a situation, and she has always been there for me when I needed someone to listen.”

Vocational rehabilitation counseling is designed to help people with disabilities decide on an appropriate employment goal. Basically, MRS helps you discover your strengths and the barriers that prevent you from getting or keeping a job. MRS will work with you to reduce the barriers. Together, you and your counselor will:

- 1) Evaluate your:
 - strengths
 - resources
 - priorities
 - abilities
 - capabilities
 - interests
 - and rehabilitation needs
- 2) Discuss your employment and career choices
- 3) Address your disability-related barriers to employment
- 4) Make and carry out an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to achieve your job goal
- 5) Follow up with you at least three months to ensure your employment success

Vocational Readiness

Working with MRS means you intend to become employed. To help develop a plan for employment, you may be asked to:

- Take interest and aptitude surveys
- Explore different occupations
- Learn more about your disability
- Get information on the local job market
- Try out different jobs and other activities to help you choose a job goal

Selecting and achieving a vocational goal can be a challenging process. It requires a lot of mental, emotional, and physical energy. Be sure your disability is managed as well as possible. Your counselor has a responsibility to evaluate your ability to benefit from services and obtain employment.

Informed Choice

A central value of MRS is “informed choice.” This means you actively participate throughout the entire rehabilitation process. You and your counselor will work together to gather the information necessary to make the best choices about every part of the vocational rehabilitation process. It is important to remember, however, that informed choice does not mean unlimited choice. A counselor may not always be able to support your choice. If this occurs, the counselor will explain the reason(s) and help you consider other choices.

Your counselor is always available to look at options and consider both positive and negative aspects. It’s important to keep in mind that you are responsible for the choices you make and the results they produce.



Informed choice is at the heart of the MRS program. It means that you make choices based on solid information.

An Overview of the Six Steps to Vocational Rehabilitation



“My counselor truly helped me help myself. He is always there for me to contact if I need to talk about how my employment is going and to bounce ideas off of. All of this on top of his job of getting me job leads, coaching me before interviews, and going over how the interviews went. His care and concern he showed to not only me, but to my family.”

Now that you have some general information about our program, let's get started with the six steps to vocational rehabilitation, but first... an overview.

It's a process

Like many things in life, vocational rehabilitation is a process. People interested in receiving help from MRS often come with a wide variety of things they need and things they expect. You and your counselor will try to sort these things out and work together toward reaching your employment goal. There are certain steps each counselor must take to make sure MRS is following the federal and state rules. These steps protect your rights and provide us with a chance to gather information needed to help you make informed choices about a good job match.

Learn how it works, “in a nutshell.”

Attend an MRS orientation or an interview to learn about the agency. If you decide that MRS is right for you, you will need to fill out an application. If you meet all the requirements, an eligibility decision will follow and then an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) will be written.

Along the way, your counselor will provide you with information about:

- many services and resources in your community
- who pays for services, and
- your rights and responsibilities

Once the services have been provided, you may need help with finding a job related to your goal. You can seek work on your own or with help from our agency. Once you get a job, you can still count on MRS to help you for at least the first three months of your new job.

For many MRS customers who have not worked in many years or who may have never worked, getting a job can be a real accomplishment. We ask that you stay in contact with your counselor so that if problems arise, your counselor can help come up with solutions to keep you employed.

Finally, we will discuss the conditions under which your case will be closed and how you might meet the requirements for post-employment assistance.

Now we are ready to walk you through the process step by step so that you will know what to expect and how we can help you reach vocational rehabilitation in six steps.

Step 1

Applying for Services

- Orientation and/or an interview. This process is an overview of MRS and a chance to ask questions.
- Complete an MRS application. This means you are applying for assistance from MRS with a goal of employment. You may be asked to provide records about your disability or sign "release" forms so your counselor can learn about your disability and how it affects you.
- Eligibility Determination. If you meet all of the requirements, your counselor will determine your eligibility.



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**MICHIGAN DEPT. OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN REHABILITATION SERVICES
APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

For MRS office use only:
 Date Application received

Please Print

Resident status: <input type="checkbox"/> US Citizen <input type="checkbox"/> Non-US Citizen, type of Visa: _____ NOTE: A copy of the VISA is required.	
I. CUSTOMER DATA	
Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)	Social Security Number
Date of Birth	
Address (No. & Street, Apt.)	City
County	Zip Code
Area Code & Phone No.	E-Mail Address
<input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> TTY	
Race/Ethnicity	Are you a Veteran?
Hispanic Origin <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Multi-Racial <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
What is your marital status? <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated	Voter Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Currently registered <input type="checkbox"/> Not registered
Are you a previous MRS customer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes > When? <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Would like to apply <input type="checkbox"/> Would not like to apply
Who referred you to MRS?	Which Office?
Primary Disability	Cause
Other Disability	Limitations
Are you currently receiving physical therapy for your disability? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Who is providing treatment?
Address	
Are you currently receiving health insurance? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Name of Insurance Coverage?
Do you have a Michigan driver's license? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes > <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you have a car, van or truck? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No > What is your means of transportation?
What kind of job would you like and what services are you requesting from MRS?	
II. SOURCES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (Which are you receiving)	
Check those that apply and indicate amount	
<input type="checkbox"/> SSI \$ _____ Mo.	<input type="checkbox"/> Food Stamps \$ _____ Mo.
<input type="checkbox"/> SSDI \$ _____ Mo.	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment Compensation \$ _____ Wk.
<input type="checkbox"/> TANF (FIP) \$ _____ Mo.	<input type="checkbox"/> Workers Compensations \$ _____ Mo.
<input type="checkbox"/> State Disability Assist. \$ _____ Mo.	<input type="checkbox"/> V.A. Benefits \$ _____ Mo.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ \$ _____
IIa. FOR SSI/SSDI "TICKET TO WORK" RECIPIENTS ONLY	
Please provide a copy of your social security card, award notice letter from the Social Security Administration, and your IWP if working with another provider.	
Type of benefit (Check both boxes if you receive both SSI and SSDI.) <input type="checkbox"/> SSI <input type="checkbox"/> SSDI	Have you received a "Ticket to Work" from SSA? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you receiving cash benefits under someone else's SSN? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Please give name and Social Security Number _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Have you assigned your ticket to any other provider? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if yes, who? _____	

Step 2



Determining Eligibility

Every person who applies for assistance from MRS has the right to know if he or she is eligible. This may seem odd since most people who come to our agency already believe they are eligible for help. Your counselor is required to evaluate your disability and need for agency services.

There are two reasons why an eligibility determination is important.

First, determining eligibility helps us identify and understand your disability-related limitations and/or barriers to employment.

Second, knowledge of your limitations/barriers is an important part of developing an employment plan.

An eligibility determination is based on an applicant having the following:

1) An existing physical or mental impairment

Your counselor will need medical records regarding your disability. If the needed information is not readily available, your counselor may ask you to take part in a medical, psychological, or physical evaluation to obtain information required for an eligibility decision.

Some examples of impairments include: amputation, brain injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, hearing loss, heart disease, learning disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, substance abuse, and many others.

2) Vocational or work-related barriers because of your disability

We are interested in learning if your disability-related barriers pose a major problem to suitable work for you given your work history, education, abilities, and capabilities.

3) Requirement of vocational rehabilitation (VR) assistance

The Rehabilitation Act states that you must “require” MRS services to obtain and maintain employment. In other words, help from this agency is essential to your working.

4) Can benefit from VR services that will lead to employment

We believe that when you come to MRS, you are interested in working. We also believe that you can work with the help of this agency. Individuals who are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) meet these requirements, if they want to work. It is taken for granted that all MRS applicants want to work with the help of MRS unless the applicant’s disability is too serious to allow the applicant to work, and this includes SSI and SSDI recipients. Sometimes, discovering how or whether you can go to work with MRS help may require an extended assessment or a trial work experience (see next page)

Finally, in most cases, you will be notified of your eligibility within 60 days. If there is a delay, you will receive a letter from your counselor stating that an eligibility decision cannot be made within the 60-day period and request your agreement to an extension of time. Once you become a customer, your eligibility will be continually reviewed. Services may be ended if it appears MRS services will not help you to become employed.

What Is an “Extended Assessment” or “Trial Work Experience”?

An extended assessment is a plan to explore your abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations in the community. It may be needed when the effects of your disability prevent you from making good use of services to reach employment. An extended assessment can last up to 12 months and provide a more complete picture of your ability to be employed.

A trial work experience may include:

- a job try-out with job supports
- volunteer work experience in community settings
- or any other work experience in real-work settings

Trial work experiences are conducted in real-work settings in the community, with supports.

The purpose of trial work experiences and/or extended assessments is to explore services such as:

- job adjustments
- physical or mental treatment
- training
- and helpful technology

that would improve your ability to work or reduce or remove the barriers that prevent you from working.

An “order of selection” goes into effect if MRS becomes unable to work with all who qualify for services. People with the most significant disabilities will be served first.

Step 3

Career Exploration & Developing a Plan

What's a Good Job for You?

Career exploration is:

- your chance to learn about yourself
- what job you may like or be good at
- the local job market, different working conditions, and
- how your disability or functional limitations may impact on employment



A vocational evaluation is one way for us to help you choose a job that will fit your unique qualities. You may be asked to complete interest surveys and personality and aptitude assessments. Time spent on your vocational evaluation can range from a few hours to a few weeks.



The type of assessment will depend on the information you and your counselor decide is needed for your unique situation. Together, you will choose the service provider, date and time of your vocational evaluation. Other career exploration activities may include community-based work experiences, job shadowing, or talking with people who are doing the type of work that interests you. You may be able to try out a job for a week or month as a way of evaluating your abilities. You can learn a lot about a job, employer expectations, and the work environment this way.

Labor Market: Where Does the Job Exist and What Is the Outlook?

One important factor in selecting a job goal is the labor market. If the job doesn't exist in your community, then you need to decide if you would be willing to move. Or, if the job outlook is poor, then you may want to continue with your career exploration. The availability of jobs varies greatly from region to region. This is why labor market information is critical. Your counselor will have ideas on how you can learn more about the local job market and outlook for specific occupations.



What Is an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)?

Once you and your counselor have agreed on an employment goal, you and your counselor will write your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). You will need to list the specific services required to make your Plan work.

An IPE is an agreement between you and MRS that identifies your employment goal and services needed to achieve it (see *Choosing Your Employment Plan*). All decisions regarding your involvement and services with MRS are based on this agreement. The IPE is the roadmap that guides your vocational rehabilitation program. It is the foundation of your success!



All services in your IPE must relate to your employment goal.

Examples of services may include:

- Vocational guidance and counseling
- Job search, placement assistance and job-keeping services
- Referral to other agencies for needed services
- Interpreter services
- Job licenses, tools, equipment, and initial supplies
- Rehabilitation and/or assistive technology services
- Training — on-the-job or in school
- Hearing aids, artificial limbs, braces, and other health services
- Specific post-employment services needed to maintain and/or regain employment

It's important for you and your counselor to agree on the services required for successful employment. Remember, every Plan is different and your Plan is developed just for you!

Writing Your IPE

The information sheets *Choosing Your Future* and *Choosing Your Employment Plan* will help you develop a good Plan. They both contain information about creating your IPE.



What an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) includes:

- A specific job goal and when you will reach it
- The services needed to reach the job goal including service providers, starting dates, and who will pay for the services
- How MRS will know if you are making progress toward your job goal
- Services and benefits from other programs that will help you reach your job goal
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services' responsibilities
- Your responsibilities
- Responsibilities that others have
- Signatures from you and your MRS counselor

Options for writing your IPE

You and your counselor can work together to write all or part of your IPE, or you can arrange for other people to help write all or part of your IPE. However, keep in mind that your MRS counselor must approve your IPE.

Who Pays for Services?

Many services are available to you at no cost. These include:

- Vocational counseling
- Disability assessment
- Vocational evaluation
- Placement services
- Cover letter and resume writing
- Some MRS offices even have on-site job clubs with ongoing workshops and access to computers

MRS may help with the purchase of other services from public and private sources when they are identified in your IPE and are necessary for your employment success.

Customer contributions

To help thousands of individuals each year, MRS has an obligation to responsibly manage funds. As a result, you will be asked to contribute to the cost of services identified in your IPE to the extent you are able. If you are unable to contribute financially, those needed services will still be provided.

Comparable benefits (other resources) available to you

In meeting your employment goal, MRS must first use other resources and services available and paid for by another source. For example, if you require mental health services, your counselor may recommend you seek free assistance from the local community mental health agency rather than from a private mental health provider. Likewise, if you require transportation for anything related to your IPE, your counselor may ask that you use public transportation and provide you with bus tokens. You must apply for financial aid if you attend college or vocational training and must use grant aid that is offered before MRS funds can be used.

Step 4

Following Your Plan

Once your IPE is developed, it serves as your “road map” to a job. It’s important to follow each step of your IPE to ensure that you are on track and making progress toward your goal. It is very important to maintain contact with your counselor. Counselors may be working with more than 100 people, so you and your counselor will need to agree on the frequency and type of contact (phone, e-mail, office visit). If you are unable to keep an appointment, it is important that you contact your counselor or any other service provider you are working with. This could be a:

- mental health provider
- physician
- job placement specialist
- physical therapist
- occupational therapist
- substance abuse counselor
- rehabilitation nurse
- or staff at the local Michigan Works! Service Center

“Last year I became associated with MRS after moving from Texas. After being guided by my counselor as well as becoming involved with Job Club and other job-seeking resolutions provided, I was able to find employment soon thereafter. Through MRS efforts, I am employed at a great job, with benefits, which allows me to live independently. Accommodations were made for my disability.”

RA-2915s (Rev. 4.2011) MICHIGAN DEPT. OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
MICHIGAN REHABILITATION SERVICES

INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

Name:	Telephone No.
Job Goal:	Date When I Will Reach This Job Goal:
Reason for Choosing This Job Goal:	
<input type="checkbox"/> My Ability To Learn This Job	<input type="checkbox"/> My Ability To Do This Job
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> My Ability To Retain This Job

SERVICES NEEDED TO REACH MY JOB GOAL

SERVICE	SERVICE PROVIDER	WHO WILL PAY FOR THE SERVICES AND HOW MUCH (Your Funds, other funds, MRS funds)	START DATE

HOW WE WILL KNOW IF I AM MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS MY JOB GOAL

SERVICES OR BENEFITS AVAILABLE FROM OTHER PROGRAMS OR RESOURCES THAT WILL ASSIST ME IN REACHING MY JOB GOAL

Step 5



“I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to MRS, and especially my counselor, for her ability to provide me with the necessary support that enabled me to start a new career and become self-sufficient. She was able to supply me with mentors, medical services, and testing, which allowed me to use my natural talents and interests in pursuit of a new job. I had little self-esteem when I started the program. I now have a new job, career, and confidence that will help me succeed in the future.”

Finding a Job

MRS provides a variety of services to assist you with finding and keeping a job. Some of these include:

- Cover letter and resume writing
- Interviewing skills
- Handling tough interview questions
- Developing job leads
- Job coaching
- On-the-job-training
- On-the-job-evaluation
- Referrals to other job placement agencies or private providers

A successful job search involves dedication, consistency, and a willingness to do what’s necessary. Most successful job seekers use contacts with family and friends, practice their interviewing skills, and do whatever they have to do to go the “extra mile.”

Customers often ask counselors, “How long will it take for me to find a job?” The response to this question varies with each person and depends on many factors such as the area you live in, the job you are seeking, and how much time you are willing to put into your job search. The best advice we can give is to approach your job search seriously and be willing to dedicate the time and energy necessary to be successful. That way, you can be sure that when the opportunity comes along, you will be the best-prepared and the most desirable candidate.

Step 6

Successfully Employed: Closing Your Case

Congratulations! You've made it to step six and have joined the ranks of more than 200 million working Americans! You should be very proud of yourself and all of your hard work. Even though you are working, your case with MRS will remain open for at least three months to make sure your employment is a success. Please be sure to maintain contact with your MRS counselor so if you have trouble on your job, your counselor can offer advice and/or assistance that will help you keep your job. After at least 90 days of working, your counselor will usually close your case, after discussing this with you. Once this occurs, you are considered "successfully rehabilitated."

Even though your case is closed, you may still meet the requirements for post-employment services. These services allow your case to be re-opened if, because of your disability, your job is in jeopardy. When this occurs, MRS may intervene to provide assistance and help you keep your position. These services vary and will depend on your unique needs.

"Closure without Employment"

There are many reasons why MRS may close your case before you go to work and consider this a "closure without employment." Your counselor will usually discuss these reasons with you, if you are available.

Our experience tells us that the most common reasons for closure without employment are:

- The counselor is unable to locate the customer.
- The customer does not respond to telephone calls or letters from the counselor.
- The customer does not cooperate. Examples include:
 - ❖ Customer does not follow through on IPE services.
 - ❖ Customer is unwilling to consider realistic job goals.
 - ❖ Customer makes threats or exhibits threatening behavior toward agency staff.
- The disability/medical condition worsens to the point of not being able to work.
- The customer makes no progress toward completing IPE services.

You will be notified in writing any time your case is being closed, the reason for the closure, your right to appeal the decision, and the availability of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) to help you (see page 15).

"I would like for my case to be closed due to the fact that I have a job as a child caregiver. I have had this job for over four months now. I am very pleased with it. I really do thank MRS for all that was given to me. I wouldn't have gotten this far without your help. I thank you for building up my self-esteem to look for a job because I didn't have a whole lot of self-esteem before."

Your Rights



You have a right to be treated politely and respectfully by MRS staff. You also have a responsibility to treat MRS staff politely and respectfully.

As a MRS customer, you have the following rights:

- To have an evaluation to see if you are eligible to receive services from the program;
- If eligible, the right to receive written information about options you have in developing an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE);
- To make informed choices about your IPE;
- To have an annual review of your IPE to see if any changes are needed;
- To be notified if there will be a delay in MRS services or if MRS cannot provide services; (Which may be caused by a cut in funding, staff, or lack of openings at facilities or schools.)
- To appeal any agency action regarding your rehabilitation program if you disagree with an MRS decision;
- To have someone assist you in the appeals process.
- You have the right to review information in your case file if you make the request in writing. However, there are two cases when more than your written request will be required:
 - 1) Information that has been provided by other agencies may be released only with their permission; and
 - 2) Certain information—such as technical, medical, or psychological reports—may have to be provided through a health professional or other representative.
- You have the right to confidentiality and privacy:
 - 1) All discussions with your counselor are kept confidential and private. Your counselor will release needed information in your case file only to those agencies directly involved in your rehabilitation program, as allowed by law.
 - 2) MRS will not release information in your case file to other agencies or people not involved in your rehabilitation program unless you give your permission in writing.
 - 3) MRS will release information in your case file without your written consent only:
 - a. if required or permitted by federal law or regulation
 - b. if required by court order
 - c. in response to investigations for law enforcement, fraud, or abuse
 - d. in situations involving abuse, neglect, or safety to protect you or others

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

You have many rights and responsibilities as an applicant and customer of MRS. To help protect your rights, you have access to the Client Assistance Program (CAP).

The purpose of CAP is to help individuals like you who are receiving services from MRS or a center for independent living. CAP will investigate complaints you may have about vocational rehabilitation services or independent living services. CAP can help you understand your rights and provide you with this information in writing.

CAP may help you with problems you may have, including:

- Difficulty working with your rehabilitation counselor
- Disagreements with decisions and actions about your services
- Disagreement with your case being closed

CAP may be able to:

- Help you advocate for yourself to obtain appropriate vocational rehabilitation services;
- Review and challenge counselor decisions regarding services;
- Inform you of your rights and services available under the Rehabilitation Act;
- Advise you in developing an Individualized Plan for Employment; and
- Advise or help you in pursuing legal, administrative, or other appropriate remedies when a determination has been made by CAP that your case has legal merit.

CAP is operated by Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc. (MPAS). MPAS is a private, nonprofit organization that offers information and advocacy services to people with disabilities.



Confidentiality and CAP

All discussions you have with CAP staff are confidential and private. CAP will discuss your situation with others only with your written permission.

CAP and Legal Services

CAP may help you appeal a decision to an impartial hearing officer regarding your rehabilitation services. Your appeal could be because:

- You have been denied services, or
- You feel you did not receive appropriate services, or
- Services to you were discontinued

What does CAP cost?

CAP provides its services at no cost to Michigan residents. This is a federally funded program.

How can I contact CAP?

You can call the CAP toll free number, 1-800-288-5923, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. This telephone number is accessible by both voice and TTY.

CAP is located at 4095 Legacy Parkway, Suite 500, Lansing, MI 48911-4263. CAP is a part of Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc. (MPAS).

Visit the CAP website at: www.mpas.org.

Your Responsibilities

Along with your rights come responsibilities. Please read these carefully:

- You have a responsibility to provide or release the information MRS needs to determine your eligibility, assess your vocational rehabilitation needs, and develop your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). If you do not make needed information available, MRS will be unable to provide you with assistance.
- You have the responsibility to be an active partner in the vocational rehabilitation process. This means that you will be expected to participate and make informed choices throughout your program.
- You have a responsibility to participate financially in your vocational rehabilitation plan to the best of your ability. If you wish to attend college or vocational training, you must apply for and use financial aid.
- You have a responsibility to use other community services and benefits in your IPE. For example, if you are eligible for Medicaid, you will be expected to use this toward a medical service in your Individualized Plan for Employment.
- You have a responsibility to keep all appointments and arrive on time for all meetings. When you are unable to do so, you will be expected to call ahead of time to cancel and reschedule your appointment. This is important because attendance is critical to your success. Employers often expect that new hires not miss any work during the first 90 days of employment. Poor attendance is the number one reason people are fired from their jobs.
- You have a responsibility to maintain contact with your counselor. Most of the time, case closure occurs because your counselor is not able to contact you. Unfortunately, it is very common for customers to move or change telephone numbers and not notify their counselors. You have a responsibility to keep in contact with your counselor and notify him or her of changes in your living arrangements.

(Continued on next page...)



Your Responsibilities



“I was involved in a serious motorcycle accident. I was in a coma for almost a month and now have a closed head injury. Before the accident, I was a machinist. I tried to return to that profession, but the injury prevented that. I have tried returning to school more than once to see if I can do something with my life, but I failed there as well. When I was ready to give up, each time my MRS counselor was there to back me up and give me the help that I needed, never letting me quit and always giving me support. I am now learning about computers.”

- You have a responsibility to cooperate with your counselor. Failure to cooperate with your counselor or the service providers listed in your IPE is another common reason a case may be closed. With MRS, vocational rehabilitation is a process based on a partnership between you and your counselor. Cooperating and working with your counselor will help you reach your employment goal.
- You have a responsibility to report any changes in your circumstances that could affect your ability to maintain contact with MRS or follow through with your IPE.
- You have a responsibility to perform satisfactorily in training or in any other activity related to your rehabilitation. This includes regular attendance.
- You have a responsibility to return any equipment purchased for you by MRS if you no longer use it for its intended purpose. MRS may be able to use the items with other individuals to assist them in reaching their employment goals.

Special Programs

Ticket to Work & Financial Independence

If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and want to go to work, you may want to learn about the **Ticket to Work** program. It is a voluntary program offered to Social Security disability beneficiaries by the Social Security Administration. Its purpose is to increase your choice of service providers that can help you with employment related services. It is important to know that participation in the **Ticket to Work** program does not mean you will lose your disability benefits. Only the Social Security Administration can make determinations about your disability benefits.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is one of the many vocational rehabilitation service providers that you can choose from. Once the MRS eligibility process has been completed, a professional vocational rehabilitation counselor can help you make informed decisions regarding your future employment and job goal. You will also be provided options in developing an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Upon development of an approved IPE, your ticket will be placed with your provider of choice.

In addition, MRS offers valuable guidance regarding Social Security work incentives – earn income while still receiving disability benefits or become independent of disability benefits through working.

Disability Management Program

The Disability Management Program of MRS' Business Network Unit is a statewide resource for employers and employees who need assistance with improving work-site ergonomics and prevention of work-related injuries. This service is available to private and self-insured employers to maximize productivity and minimize costs associated with disabilities that prevent people from performing the essential functions of their job or returning to work following an injury. This is a fee-for-service program mandated to cover costs by Michigan's Public Act 315 of 1982. Individuals who are receiving Worker's Disability Compensation, Auto No-Fault benefits or Long-term Disability benefits will be referred to the Business Network Unit, Disability Management Program for services to see if they qualify for this program.

The staff of the Disability Management Program can assist in three major areas:

Return-to-Work services are arranged and provided to reduce or remove barriers that prevent individuals from returning to work who have been absent due to injury or illness from returning to work. This may include modifications (ergonomic) to the worksite, provision of assistive technology and training appropriate work habits.



If you would like more information about the Ticket to Work program, ask for a copy of "Important Questions to Consider About the Ticket to Work Program."

(Continued on next page)

Special Programs



“My business has given me an opportunity to develop my future, a possibility I may not otherwise have had.”

Retention Services for employees who are at risk of lost time or losing their jobs because of illness or injury.

Prevention of disabilities through ergonomic assessment and consultation on workplace design and equipment. This includes education of the worker and manager to promote good body mechanics and a safe work environment. Prevention services can be focused on the needs of a single individual, a high risk job classification, or an entire department or unit.

Self-Employment

Many people in America choose to be self-employed. Generally, people are unaware of the opportunity for people with disabilities to become successfully self-employed.

Self-employment includes:

- tradespeople
- professionals
- contractual service workers
- technical workers
- small business owners or micro business enterprise

Generally, self-employment is defined as “the consumer owns, manages and operates the planned endeavor for profit or fee and is not considered to be an employee of another person, business or organization.”

Developing a self-employment plan is important, but can be complicated and sometimes overwhelming. Please consult with your MRS counselor so that he or she can give you important information before you get started with becoming self-employed.

Michigan Career and Technical Institute

The Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI), operated by Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), has provided vocational training for adults with disabilities since 1944. MCTI offers a unique blend of caring human support services and state-of-the-art training for jobs needed in business and industry today.

The main campus—located on the shores of Pine Lake in southwest Barry County—is completely accessible. For adults who are eligible for MRS services, tuition and room and board are free. Low-cost apartments for students with families are available next to the main campus. A career assessment service is available to help students explore their career options. A full range of health, psychological, and social work services is also available. In addition, all classrooms as well as the dormitory rooms, cafeteria, library, and leisure services are located in one building for easy accessibility out of the weather.

Depending on aptitude and interest, students may choose to enroll in one of 14 training programs. Each training area has an active Business Advisory Committee made up of employers in that field. Their participation assures students that the curriculum and equipment meet business and industry standards. MCTI is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. The school's training programs are approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

MCTI opened an auxiliary campus in spring 2010 in Detroit. Unlike MCTI, MCTI East is not a residential program. Students live in their community and attend MCTI East during the day. This community based setting of programs include:

- Career Readiness Center
- Certified Nurse Assistant
- Community Based Training (Dialysis Technician)
- Employer-Based Training (Asbestos Abatement, Automotive Dismantling, Pharmacy and Janitorial).

Support services are also available to help each student meet his or her personal training objectives. Services include career counseling, occupational therapy, career assessment accommodations and job placement services.

MCTI East is conveniently located on a bus-line and is fully accessible. In addition, all training rooms and the student canteen promote a welcoming learning environment.



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**Michigan is home to
1.7 million people with
disabilities — one in
every five residents.**

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Voter registration forms are available at all MRS offices. We would be happy to give you this form to complete and mail to your county clerk.

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Important Names, Phone Numbers & Email Addresses

Name _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

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E-mail Address _____

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1-888-605-6722 (TTY, toll free)
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