

# Six Steps to Vocational Rehabilitation



## Customer Handbook

**MRS** PROMOTING  
ABILITIES  
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Welcome to Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) . . . . .        | 1  |
| What is Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling?. . . . .             | 2  |
| An Overview of the Six Steps to Vocational Rehabilitation. . . . . | 4  |
| Step 1–Applying for Services . . . . .                             | 5  |
| Step 2–Determining Eligibility . . . . .                           | 6  |
| Step 3–Career Exploration and Developing a Plan . . . . .          | 10 |
| Step 4–Following Your Plan . . . . .                               | 13 |
| Step 5–Finding a Job . . . . .                                     | 14 |
| Step 6–Successfully Employed: Closing Your Case. . . . .           | 15 |
| Your Rights. . . . .   | 16 |
| Client Assistance Program (CAP). . . . .                           | 17 |
| Your Responsibilities . . . . .                                    | 19 |
| Ticket to Work and Financial Independence. . . . .                 | 21 |
| Business Network Unit . . . . .                                    | 21 |
| Self-Employment. . . . .   | 22 |
| Michigan Career and Technical Institute. . . . .                   | 23 |
| Index. . . . .   | 24 |



***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

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (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.
- 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.
- 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.



# 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.”*  
- MRS customer

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.
  - 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 for 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.***

# 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.”*  
- MRS customer

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.
- 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.



**APPLICATION FOR VOCATIONAL  
AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services  
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

|  |
|--|
| For MRS office use only<br>Date application received |
|--|

**Note:** Your case is considered an open case when (1) the entire application is completed and signed by you and a MRS counselor, and (2) you are available to take part in the eligibility determination process.

**PART 1 (to be completed by customer)**

| Personal Information  |                   |             |                         |
|---|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Last Name:  | First Name:       | Middle Name | Social Security Number: |
| Name you want to be called:   | Former Last Name: | Birth Date: |                         |
| Gender<br><input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Do not wish to self-identify   |                   |             |                         |
| Mailing Address:  |                   |             |                         |
| City:   | State:            | Zip Code:   |                         |
| County:   | Mail Address:     |             |                         |
| Primary Phone<br>Ext. <input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> TTY <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Cell <input type="checkbox"/> Video Phone   |                   |             |                         |
| Second Phone<br>Ext. <input type="checkbox"/> Voice <input type="checkbox"/> TTY <input type="checkbox"/> Fax <input type="checkbox"/> Cell <input type="checkbox"/> Video Phone  |                   |             |                         |
| How did you hear about MRS?   |                   |             |                         |
| Were you a customer of MRS in the past?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |                   | When?       | What Office?            |
| Characteristics   |                   |             |                         |
| Are you a citizen of the U.S.?    If no, what type of Visa do you have? <b>A copy of your Visa is required.</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |                   |             |                         |
| Do you have a Work Permit?    Type of Permit:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |                   |             |                         |
| What is your race/ethnicity (check all that apply)?<br><input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Arab <input type="checkbox"/> Asian<br><input type="checkbox"/> Hmong <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |                   |             |                         |
| Do you believe yourself to be multi-racial?<br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No   |                   |             |                         |

# 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, because 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 assistance.

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

### 4) Can benefit from vocational rehabilitation 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 trial work experiences (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 requesting your agreement to an extension. 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 a “Trial Work Experience”?**

Trial work experience is a plan to explore your abilities, capabilities and capacity to perform, to the maximum extent possible, in competitive integrated work situations in the community. They are conducted in real work settings in the community with supports. Trial work experiences can last up to 12 months and provide a more complete picture of your ability to be employed.

Trial work experiences may include:

- Job tryouts with job supports.
- Volunteer work experiences in community settings.
- Any other work experiences in real-work settings.

In most cases, you will be notified of your eligibility within 60 days. If there is going to be a delay, you will receive a letter from your counselor stating that an eligibility decision cannot be made within the 60-day period requesting your agreement to an extension. 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 “Order of Selection for Services”?

MRS wants to serve all individuals who are eligible for services as quickly as possible.

Sometimes, however, we may not have enough staff or money to do so. If this should happen, we will tell you about it at the same time we tell you about your eligibility for services.

### Priority Groups

If we cannot serve everyone who is eligible right away, federal law states we must serve:

- (1) People with the **most significant** disabilities first.
- (2) People with **significant** disabilities second.
- (3) People whose disabilities are **not significant** third.

### Definitions of Significant Disability

You will be determined:

- **Most significantly disabled** if you are limited because of your disability in three or more areas of functioning\* and require three or more vocational rehabilitation services over at least six months.
- **Significantly disabled** if you are limited in two areas of functioning\* and require three or more vocational rehabilitation services over at least six months.
- **Not significantly disabled** if you are limited in one area of functioning\* and do not require multiple services over six months.

\*Examples of limitations in areas of functioning could be walking, talking, hearing, taking care of yourself or working at a job.

An eligible SSDI or SSI recipient or beneficiary is automatically considered to be, at least, an individual with a significant disability.

## **Eligible for Services**

MRS will tell you which priority group you have been assigned when you are informed that you are eligible for services.

You will also be told whether you will need to wait for services or if we are able to serve you right away.

If MRS is not able to serve you at the time you are made eligible, you will be placed on a waiting list in the order that you applied.

You will be:

- Referred to other federal, state or local programs that might be able to assist you with employment.
- Provided with the names and agencies that may assist you.
- Given a point of contact and telephone number to each agency for easy access.

Eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment may be served regardless of the assigned priority category.

You will be removed from the waiting list when MRS has enough staff and resources to serve you. MRS will contact you every six months to determine if you are still interested in staying on the waiting list. Your MRS counselor will contact you when you are able to be removed from the waiting list.

## **If You Disagree with the Priority Group**

If you do not agree with the priority group to which you have been assigned, you may contact your counselor, contact the manager of the office where you are served or appeal the decision. The brochure "How to Appeal Decisions Made by Michigan Rehabilitation Services" describes the MRS appeals process. You can obtain a copy of this brochure at any MRS office.

If you need help with an appeal, contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP) at the toll free number 800-288-5923.

# Step 3

## Career Exploration and Developing a Plan

### What's a Good Job for You?

Career exploration is your chance to learn about yourself and to:

- Look at what job you may like or be good at.
- Check out the local job market, different working conditions.
- Look at how your disability or functional limitation 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.



# Individualized Plan for Employment

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 IPE work.

An IPE is an agreement between you and MRS that identifies your employment goal and services needed to achieve it (ask for *Choosing Your Employment Plan*). All decisions regarding your involvement and services with MRS are based on this agreement. The IPE is the road map 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.
- Accommodation services such as interpreter, notetaker, Captioned Telephone, Frequency Modulation system, etc.
- 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 IPE is different and your IPE 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 IPE. They both contain information about creating your IPE.



## **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.
- MRS 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 training.

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.
- 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.”*  
- MRS customer

**INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT**  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services  
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

**1. General Information**

|                 |                 |                        |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Customer Name   | Plan Start Date | Expected Plan End Date |
| Employment Goal |                 |                        |
| Custom          |                 |                        |

Supported Employment  Small Business Enterprise

Reason for selecting this employment goal checkbox list (at least one item or the narrative is required)

|  |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A good choice given my abilities and disability.<br><input type="checkbox"/> I am currently doing this type of work.<br><input type="checkbox"/> I explored options and feel this is a good choice<br><input type="checkbox"/> I have a job offer to do this type of work.<br><input type="checkbox"/> I have successfully completed related training.<br><input type="checkbox"/> I have successfully done this type of work before.<br><input type="checkbox"/> It agrees with my IEP plan through my high school.<br><input type="checkbox"/> It matches my interests, abilities and strengths.<br><input type="checkbox"/> The job outlook for this type of work is good.<br>Other: _____ |
|--|

**2. Planned Services (at least one required)**

*\*Attached planned services page(s) (counselor is to print additional pages (page 2) for each identified service and sum the totals here).*

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| <b>Total Costs</b>               |
| Participant _____                |
| Others/Comparable Benefits _____ |
| Agency _____                     |
| Source to be Determined _____    |
| <b>Total Plan</b>                |

# 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.”***  
***- MRS customer***

## 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 training.
- Interviewing skills training.
- Handling tough interview questions training.
- Developing job leads training.
- 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 that if you have trouble on your job, your counselor can offer advice and/or assistance that will help you keep your job. After you have worked at least 90 days, 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 reopened 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 following through on IPE services.
  - Customer is unwilling to consider realistic job goals. Customer is unwilling to
  - 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 17).

*"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."  
- MRS customer*

# 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 an 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.
  - 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

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.
- 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.
- You feel you did not receive appropriate services.
- 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, 800-288-5923, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 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](http://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 IPE.
- 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 No. 1 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.”*

*- MRS customer*

- 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.

# 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 your choice to participate in this program offered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). 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.

Talk to an MRS counselor about how working may affect your disability benefits. MRS offers valuable guidance regarding Social Security work incentives — earn income while still receiving disability benefits or become independent of disability benefits through working.

MRS is one of the many vocational rehabilitation service providers from which you can choose. 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). Review Step 3, Career Exploration & Developing a Plan, on pages 10-12 for more detailed information.

## Business Network Unit

The Business Network Unit (BNU) is a statewide resource that has a dual-customer base serving both MRS customers and community businesses. Services are provided by licensed occupational therapists and vocational rehabilitation counselors.

Examples of services BNU staff provide are:

- Worksite and home evaluations.
- Ergonomic assessments (improving efficiencies and comfort while maximizing safety).
- Assistive technology evaluations.
- Vocational services for individuals who are deaf/hard-of-hearing (including Kooser Workshop for individuals with hearing loss).



*If you would like more information about the Ticket to Work program, ask for a copy of “Michigan Rehabilitation Services and 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.”*  
- MRS customer

- Vocational assessments (determine career opportunities based on vocational experience skills and disability factors).
- Transferable skills analyses and labor market surveys.
- Job analyses.
- Small business consultation.
- Labor market surveys.
- Business/employer account development.
- Disability awareness, accessibility, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) worksite recommendations.

## 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 employment in which “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 13 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.

Visit [www.michigan.gov/MCTI](http://www.michigan.gov/MCTI) to learn more.



# Index



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

Accommodations, 7  
Accreditation, 23  
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 22  
Amputation, 6  
Appeals, 15, 16, 18  
Application, 4, 5  
Aptitude Assessments, 2, 10  
Artificial limbs, 11  
Assistive Technology, 7  
Attendance, 19  
Barriers, 2, 6, 7  
Braces, 11  
Brain injury, 6  
Business Advisory Committee, 23  
Cancer, 6  
Career exploration, 2, 10, 23  
Case closure, 4, 15, 17, 20  
Cerebral palsy, 6  
Client Assistance Program (CAP), 15, 17, 18  
Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, 23  
Community resources, 1, 4, 19  
Comparable benefits, 12  
Confidentiality, 16, 18  
Counselor, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21  
Cover letter writing, 12, 14  
Diabetes, 6  
Disability assessment, 6, 12  
Disability Management Program, 21  
Eligibility, 1, 4, 5, 6, 15, 19, 23  
Epilepsy, 6  
Employers, 19, 21, 23  
Employer expectations, 10, 19  
Employment, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22  
Employment goal, 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20  
Employment plan (see *Individualized Plan for Employment*)  
Employment search (see *job search*)  
Equipment, 11, 20  
Ergonomic assessment, 21  
Extended assessment, 7  
Federal laws/regulations/rules, 1, 4, 6, 16  
Financial aid, 12  
Functional limitations, 6, 8, 10  
Hearing aids, 11  
Hearing loss, 6  
Heart disease, 6

# Index

Informational interviews, 10  
Independent living, 17  
Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20  
Informed choice(s), 3, 4, 16, 19  
Initial Supplies, 11  
Interest surveys, 2, 10  
Interpreter services, 11  
Interviewing skills, 14  
Job(s), 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21  
Job clubs, 12  
Job coaching, 14  
Job goal (see *employment goal*)  
Job leads, 14  
Job market, 2, 10  
Job placement, 1, 14  
Job placement specialists, 1, 13  
Job search, 1, 4, 11, 14  
Job shadowing, 10  
Job tryout (see *trial work experience*)  
Keeping a job, 4, 11, 15  
Labor market (see *job market*)  
Learning disability, 6  
Medicaid, 19  
Medical documentation/information/reports, 6, 16  
Medical evaluation, 6  
Mental disability/impairment, 6  
Mental health, 12, 13  
Mental illness, 6  
Michigan Career and Technical Institute, 23  
Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc. (MPAS), 18  
Michigan Works! Service Center, 13  
Multiple sclerosis, 6  
Muscular dystrophy, 6  
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 23  
Occupational licenses, 11  
Occupational therapist, 13  
On-the-job evaluation, 7, 14  
On-the-job training, 11, 14  
Order of selection, 8, 9  
Orientation/intake/interview, 4, 5  
Paying for services, 4, 12, 19  
Personality assessments, 10  
Physician, 13  
Physical evaluation, 6  
[www.michigan.gov/mrs](http://www.michigan.gov/mrs)



# Index



*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.*

**Physical disability/impairment, 6, 22**  
**Physical therapist, 13**  
**Placement assistance/services, 11, 12**  
**Plan (see *Individualized Plan for Employment*)**  
**Policies and procedures, 1, 15**  
**Post-employment assistance/services, 4, 11, 15**  
**Psychological evaluation, 6**  
**Psychological information/reports, 16**  
**Psychological services, 12, 23**  
**Prevention of disabilities, 21**  
**Referral(s), 11, 14, 17**  
**Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 6**  
**Rehabilitation aides, 1**  
**Rehabilitation nurse, 13**  
**Rehabilitation process, 3, 4, 19**  
**Rehabilitation technology services, 11**  
**Responsibilities, 4, 12, 17, 19, 20**  
**Restoration, 7**  
**Resume writing, 12, 14**  
**Return-to-work services, 21**  
**Rights, 1, 4, 6, 15, 16, 17, 19**  
**Self-employment, 22**  
**Self-sufficiency, 1, 21**  
**Services, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21**  
**Small (micro) business enterprise, 21**  
**Social Security disability benefits, 21**  
**Social Security work incentives, 21**  
**Social work services, 23**  
**Substance abuse, 6, 13**  
**Supported employment, 7, 17**  
**Support services, 7, 23**  
**Ticket to Work, 21**  
**Tools, 11**  
**Training, 1, 7, 11, 12, 14, 23**  
**Transportation, 12**  
**Trial work experience, 2, 7, 10**  
**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 23**  
**Vocational evaluation, 1, 10, 12, 15**  
**Vocational rehabilitation (VR), 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 17, 19, 20**  
**Volunteer work experience, 7**  
**Voter registration, 26**  
**Work-related injuries, 21**  
**Written consent/permission, 16, 18**  
**Youth transition, 17**





# Important Names, Phone Numbers and Email Addresses

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

# Important Names, Phone Numbers and Email Addresses

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_



Michigan Department of Health and Human Services  
Michigan Rehabilitation Services  
PO Box 30010 • Lansing, MI 48909  
800-605-6722 (voice, toll free)\*  
Email: [MRS-CustomerAssistance@michigan.gov](mailto:MRS-CustomerAssistance@michigan.gov)

**[www.michigan.gov/mrs](http://www.michigan.gov/mrs)**

\*TTY users may contact MRS by dialing 711 and providing the relay operator with the toll free number.

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The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, genetic information, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political beliefs or disability.