

If you disagree with your Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) counselor about a decision related to your rehabilitation program, you can appeal that decision. This pamphlet explains what you must do to have the decision reconsidered.

Talking It Over Informally

First, talk it over with your counselor. An open discussion of your disagreement may help to clarify the situation and make the need for a formal hearing unnecessary.

You can also bring your disagreement to the attention of the district manager if you would like help to resolve the situation informally.

Requesting a Hearing

If you still disagree with the decision after talking it over with your counselor and the district manager, you have a right to request a formal hearing.

Note: If you do not believe your disagreement can be resolved by talking it over informally with your counselor or the district manager, you can first request a formal hearing.

To request a hearing, you must write to the MRS director within 30 days of the date the decision was made. In your letter, you must state what decision you disagree with, give the name of the MRS office where you are being served, and ask for a formal hearing. The mailing address is:

**Bureau Director
Michigan Department of Human Services
Michigan Rehabilitation Services
P O Box 30010
Lansing, MI 48909**

About the Hearing

The hearing will take place within 60 days of the date your request for a hearing is received. It will be conducted by a randomly assigned, impartial hearing officer who is not an employee of Michigan Rehabilitation Services. It will be held in a location convenient to everyone involved in the hearing.

You will be able to present written information and have other individuals testify at the hearing to support your position.

You also may question the written information and witnesses the MRS representative presents to support the decision made by your counselor.

The hearing officer will send you a written decision within 30 days of the date of the



hearing. If you disagree with the final hearing decision, your next step is to take legal action through circuit court.

Mediation as an Alternative

You can ask to have your dispute *mediated* as an alternative to a formal hearing.

You have a right to use mediation once you have requested a formal hearing. You will be informed of the opportunity to pursue mediation when your request for a formal hearing is acknowledged in writing by MRS.

Mediation is a voluntary process in which you and MRS try to find a solution to your dispute with the help of a trained, neutral person called a mediator.

The mediator helps you and MRS explore solutions that you both can agree to. Any agreement reached is put in writing. Both you and the MRS representative sign the agreement and both of you receive a copy.

Mediation is scheduled in a timely manner at a location convenient to both you and MRS. Discussions that occur during the mediation process are confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent hearing or civil proceeding.

If mediation does not produce an agreement between you and MRS, you keep your right to a formal hearing. The hearing still must take place within 60 days of the date your request for a hearing was received.

Some Important Rights

- You have a right to be represented at any time during your mediation session or formal hearing by a parent, guardian, family member, Client Assistance Program representative, other advocate, or an attorney.
- Unless you give your permission, Michigan Rehabilitation Services may not reduce or withhold a service related to the decision you are disputing during the course of your mediation or formal hearing.
- If you need an interpreter, reader or transportation assistance because of your disability, or have other special needs during the course of your mediation or formal hearing, Michigan Rehabilitation Services will provide this service at your request.
- You may review and receive copies of information in your case record related to your dispute. However, there are two exceptions: First, some information must be requested directly from the agency that provided it. Second, some information may be shared only with your qualified representative. You will be told if either of these exceptions applies to you.
- You have a right to review and receive copies of relevant Michigan Rehabilitation Services policy and guideline statements.

Further Information

If you have any questions about the Michigan Rehabilitation Services client appeals process, mediation, or any of your rights provided under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, contact your local MRS district office. The manager or your counselor will be glad to discuss your questions or any other vocational rehabilitation matter. You can also contact the MRS hearings manager in Lansing toll free at 1-800-605-6722 (voice) or 1-888-605-6722 (TTY).

You may receive additional information from the Client Assistance Program by calling the toll free number 1-800-288-5923. In the Lansing area, call 517-487-1755. Both numbers are accessible by voice or TTY.

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P.O. Box 30010
Lansing, Michigan 48909
1-800-605-6722 (toll free, voice)
1-888-605-6722 (toll free, TTY)
www.michigan.gov/mrs
MRS-CustomerAssistance@michigan.gov**

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STATE OF MICHIGAN
Department of Human Services

MRS PROMOTING
ABILITIES
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

How to Appeal Decisions Made by Michigan Rehabilitation Services