

## Informed Choice

### **What is Informed Choice?**

Informed choice is the process of choosing from options based on accurate information and knowledge. These options are developed by a partnership consisting of the consumer and the counselor that will empower the consumer to make decisions resulting in a successful vocational rehabilitation outcome.

### **What are My Counselor's Responsibilities in Informed Choice?**

- To provide you with information about your opportunities for Informed Choice so you can fully participate in making your own decisions throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.
- To provide you with sufficient information about your employment and service options so you can make choices for yourself.
- To assist you in making decisions if you need help.

### **What are My Responsibilities in Informed Choice?**

- To discuss with your counselor your interests, preferences, experience, education and goals so your counselor can assist you in exploring and selecting goals and services you want to have in your rehabilitation program.
- To work with your counselor in developing options and gathering information.
- To make decisions and take actions based on the information you and your counselor have developed together.

### **What Else Can I Expect from the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission to Support Me in Making Informed Choices?**

You can expect that MRC will:

- Let you know about Informed Choice in a way that you can understand it.
- Provide you with sufficient information so you can make Informed Choices about services and service providers.
- Enable you to make choices about your long-term vocational goal, your intermediate goals, and the services and the service providers you want to have in your Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).
- Allow for a change in your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor if you feel a change is needed.

## **What Options do I Have in developing my Individualized Plan for Employment?**

You can choose to develop your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) partly or totally with your MRC counselor or by yourself. If you choose to write your own IPE, you can choose to have someone, other than your MRC counselor, assist you. When you develop your IPE by yourself or with the help of someone besides your MRC counselor, you must carefully review all the information your counselor provides for you to consider. You should keep in mind that both you and your MRC counselor have to agree on the goals, services and service providers that are listed in your IPE.

## **May I Consider any Job Goals, Services or Service Providers?**

You may discuss any options with your counselor. Your counselor will assist you in exploring ideas as well as make suggestions for you to consider.

## **May I Choose any Job Goals, Services or Service Providers I Want?**

You will certainly be able to choose from among what you and your counselor decide are good options for you. That is why it is so important for you to spend the time you need with your counselor to identify good options. Sometimes there may be things you would like to do or places you would like to go for services that you will not be able to choose because of laws, regulations, qualification issues and so on. Any time you face these kinds of limits to choosing what you want, your counselor will fully explain the reason for it. Occasionally, your choices may be limited by your disability, and your counselor will explain this to you. For example, a person who is legally blind cannot get a driver's license and, therefore, cannot be employed as a truck driver.

## **What if I Feel Strongly About Something I Want or Need and My Counselor Says “No”?**

If, after your discussions with your counselor, your counselor says “no” to a goal, service or a service provider that you want, you have several options. You may talk to your counselor's supervisor or the area office director to get another opinion or more options. You may call the MRC Ombudsperson at (617) 204-3603 and ask for assistance. You can get help from the Massachusetts Office on Disability Client Assistance Program by calling (617) 727-7440. And you can request an appeal by writing to:

Customer Relations Department  
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission  
600 Washington Street  
Boston, MA 02111

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (*ADA*) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment and public services provided by government agencies. If consumers or employees of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability, they should contact the Commission's Civil Rights Officer: Mary Connelly, Office of Disability & Community Services, 600 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111, (617) 348-5945.

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