

THE CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: YOUR RIGHTS IN THE REHABILITATION PROCESS

THE REHABILITATION ACT

The Rehabilitation Act is a federal law which authorizes the use of federal and state funds for vocational training and related services that assist individuals with disabilities in gaining employment and living more independently.

VOCATIONAL SERVICES AND ELIGIBILITY

The two state agencies that provide funding for a wide range of employment training, support services and independent living are:

- Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) for New Yorkers who are blind
- Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), for all other disabilities.
- To be eligible for assistance a New Yorker must have a disability which “represents a substantial impediment to employment” and “requires vocational services.”

SERVICES AVAILABLE AT VESID AND CBVH

The following are a sampling of services available at VESID and CBVH:

- Counseling
- Evaluations
- College assistance
- Vocational training
- Assistive technology
- Transportation & driver training
- On-the-job training
- Small business development
- Home and vehicle modifications
- Orientation & mobility training
- Job placement

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

The client Assistance Program (CAP) is a statewide network of advocates available to assist New Yorkers with disabilities in gaining access to VESID and CBVH services.

CAP advocates provide information, support and strategies for negotiating VESID, CBVH and related service systems.

CAP advocates are independent of VESID or CBVH and are committed to promoting consumers access to quality services and supports.

The CAP program is administered by the NYS Commission on Quality of Care (NYSCQC).

WHEN SHOULD I CALL CAP?

CAP advocates can assist you at any point in your efforts to obtain training, employment, and related services. CAP can assist, for example:

- When you apply for services or have questions about which services you are entitled to;
- When you disagree with decisions made by your counselor with regard to your goals and services;
- When you have problems or delays in obtaining services, equipment, and training from VESID, CBVH, independent living centers, or other programs; and,
- If you object to your case closure.

DO I GET TO CHOOSE MY EMPLOYMENT OR CAREER GOALS?

Your employment and career goals should be consistent with your interests and abilities. VESID and CBVH rely on your demonstrated abilities to justify your employment and career goals.

If you believe your service plan does not reflect your interests and abilities, call CAP.

DO I GET TO CHOOSE SERVICE PROVIDERS?

The Rehabilitation Act requires VESID and CBVH to provide consumers with a choice in service options. All training and services, however, must be approved by VESID or CBVH.

The vast majority of needs can be met by VESID and CBVH approved service providers. Under some circumstances, however, other providers may be utilized. If you experience difficulty in obtaining appropriate service providers, CAP can be of assistance.

HOW CAN CAP ASSIST ME?

CAP can review your plan of service, discuss options, and act as your representative in negotiating solutions to training and service disputes.

CAP can speed up the process by working with your VESID or CBVH counselor.

CAP can provide you with information and referrals to a wide range of service options that complement VESID and CBVH services.

CAP can provide technical assistance in accessing Social Security work incentives; resolving default student loans; applying for college financial aid; accessing health insurance; and, securing other related services.

WHAT IF I WANT TO CHALLENGE A SERVICE DENIAL?

CAP typically attempts to mediate and negotiate a resolution to your complaint. CAP can also represent you at informal meetings, and at more formal reviews to get the services to which you are entitled. In cases where a court appeal is necessary, CAP can provide you with a lawyer.

WHAT IF I HAVE AN INDEPENDENT LIVING COMPLAINT?

CAP is available to assist in resolving complaints and concerns related to independent living services. For assistance in resolving independent living issues, or for more information on the Client Assistance Program, call or write:

NYS CAP Coordinator
New York State Commission on quality of Care
401 State Street
Schenectady, NY 12305-2397
(518) 381-7098
(Collect calls accepted)

Website: www.cqc.state.ny.us