

## MAKING Employment Goals a REALITY

Disability Rights Tennessee (DRT) is a nonprofit legal services organization dedicated to protecting the rights of Tennesseans with disabilities. DRT is the federally mandated Protection & Advocacy System for Tennessee.

DRT provides advocacy services to help people with disabilities address barriers to employment.

**“Disability Rights Tennessee made sure I understood my rights and that I received the benefits I needed.”**

--DRT Client

Equality. Inclusion. Justice.



Formerly Disability Law & Advocacy Center of TN

**www.DISABILITYRIGHTSTN.org**  
**800.342.1660 | gethelp@disabilityrightstn.org**  
**Memphis | Nashville | Knoxville**

Disability Rights Tennessee provides Employment Advocacy Services through the following programs:

### **Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)**

The program was established under the Ticket to Work Improvement Act of 1999. The purpose of this project, which is funded by the Social Security Administration, is to protect the legal rights of Social Security Beneficiaries in their efforts to return to work. Social Security has reviewed this for technical accuracy only; this should not be considered an official Social Security document.

### **Client Assistance Program (CAP)**

CAP was created to assist all clients and applicants of Vocational Rehabilitation and Centers for Independent Living. Funding for CAP is administered by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration.



## Employment Advocacy Services



Formerly Disability Law & Advocacy Center of TN

**www.DISABILITYRIGHTSTN.org**

## HOW DRT CAN HELP

### Education & Training

- Provide information about programs, services, and supports available to help you obtain, maintain, regain employment
- Provide information about SSA Work Incentives
- Answer questions about your legal rights

### Guidance

Navigate employment services:

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
- Ticket to Work, including Employment Networks
- Other Employment First Initiatives

Support requests for accommodations:

- How to ask for a change to job/work place/rules to help you apply for a job, do a job, or enjoy work benefits

### Advocacy

Promote integrated and competitive employment for VR clients and Social Security beneficiaries

Many people reach out to DRT because they have questions about Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and policies. We help by explaining your rights and trying to resolve the issue with your VR counselor. Below are some steps you can take to help with this process.

## 10 Steps to a Successful VR Experience

1. **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:** Your VR counselor will give you a sheet of paper with your rights as a VR client. Read it!
2. **KNOW WHAT YOU NEED:** As a client of VR, you are a full partner in developing your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Your VR counselor should assist you in choosing a career consistent with your unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, capabilities, and informed choice.
3. **SPEAK UP:** Ask your VR counselor for the VR policy when you disagree with a decision. You can also request to speak with a supervisor.
4. **GET INVOLVED:** This is **your** IPE; do not wait for your VR counselor to take charge.
5. **BE ON TIME:** Never miss an appointment with your VR counselor.
6. **STAY IN TOUCH:** Always keep your VR counselor informed of changes in your address, phone number and work status. Answer all phone calls, emails, and letters immediately.
7. **GET IT IN WRITING:** Read everything you are asked to sign and get a copy. Make sure everything you and your VR counselor agree on is included in your IPE. Ask for documents in alternative formats (Braille, large print, etc.).
8. **KNOW YOUR OPTIONS:** You can appeal any VR decision that affects your services. Your appeal must be filed within 30 days after the notice of the decision you do not like.
9. **REMEMBER:** Your VR counselor is working with you to achieve your goals.
10. **FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR DREAMS!**

### What to Expect When You Call

A member of DRT's Intake Team will discuss your concerns with you and provide initial information.

Your issue will be sent to the Review Team to determine if you need the assistance of an advocate to help resolve your concerns.

If DRT opens a case on your issue, you and your DRT advocate will work together to resolve your problem.

Remember that each issue is unique. In deciding whether direct services can be provided, DRT will consider several factors.

## REQUEST HELP

800.342.1660

Relay Calls Accepted

[gethelp@disabilityrightstn.org](mailto:gethelp@disabilityrightstn.org)

Español: 800.287.9636, x.126

[www.DISABILITYRIGHTSTN.org](http://www.DISABILITYRIGHTSTN.org)