

WHAT IS THE CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROJECT?

A Fact Sheet From The Minnesota Disability Law Center.

This fact sheet is intended as a brief introduction to the rights of disabled individuals under the federal Rehabilitation Act. This information does not constitute legal advice because each individual's case is different and the law is constantly subject to change. This fact sheet is based on Minnesota and federal laws and regulations. Therefore, it may not be valid in other states. Contact the Client Assistance Project for advice about your individual case.

Background Information:

The Client Assistance Project (CAP) is a statewide program that advocates on behalf of disabled Minnesotans who are having problems with the vocational rehabilitation system. This means that CAP can help those individuals who are applying for services from or who already are clients of Rehabilitation Services (RS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB). In Minnesota, RS serves individuals who have physical and/or mental disabilities. SSB serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

CAP's two primary functions are to:

1. advise clients and applicants of rehabilitation programs of their legal rights; and
2. determine whether vocational rehabilitation clients are receiving the services and benefits to which they are entitled under the law.

CAP gets federal money to represent eligible disabled Minnesotans. In fact, federal law

requires each state that receives federal funding under the Rehabilitation Act to operate vocational rehabilitation programs to have a CAP office too. However, CAP advocates are not state employees. Our office is part of the Minnesota Disability Law Center and is housed with the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis. The Minnesota Disability Law Center receives money for the CAP program directly from the federal government. This means that RS and SSB have no control over CAP's money or how CAP operates.

Basic Rights Under the Rehabilitation Act:

CAP receives many phone calls from individuals asking "What are my rights?". Unfortunately, we cannot give you specific information in this fact sheet because each person's case is different. To answer your specific questions, we would have to review your RS or SSB file and talk with your RS or SSB counselor.

However, following is a list of general basic rights that are provided under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As a client or

applicant of RS or SSB, you have the right to:

1. apply for services;
2. receive an evaluation to determine whether you are eligible for services;
3. see most of the information in your RS or SSB case file. However, the agency can ask you to sign a release form first;
4. keep your RS or SSB file confidential;
5. develop your individualized employment plan (EP) to fit your unique needs; and
6. appeal a decision if you do not agree with it or if you feel that your rights have been violated.

How Can CAP Advocates Help?

If you are a client or an applicant of RS or SSB, you can call CAP for help if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your vocational rehabilitation services. CAP **does not** provide direct vocational rehabilitation services, such as education, training or equipment.

In general, a CAP advocate **MAY** be able to help you in any of the following ways:

1. help you or advocate on your behalf to obtain appropriate vocational rehabilitation services from RS or SSB;
2. review and challenge eligibility decisions made by RS or SSB;

3. inform you of your rights and services available under the Rehabilitation Act;
4. advise you in developing an EP
5. 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.

For more information about CAP or to apply for CAP services, call (612) 334-5970 (metro area office); (218) 722-5625 (Duluth office); 1-800-292-4150 (statewide); or (612) 332-4668 (TTY).

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