



Employment Rights Helpline at Equip for Equality

SELF-ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE ★ LEGAL ADVICE ABOUT EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ★ SAMPLE LETTERS & FORMS ★ REFERRALS

Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS): Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

What is the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)?

DRS (pronounced like the word “doors”) is a state agency that is part of the Illinois Department of Human Services. DRS has a program called Vocational Rehabilitation or “VR” services, which can help you find a job or a training program or school to help you get ready to work in a specific area.

What does DRS do?

Here are a few examples of what DRS can help you do:

- Apply for jobs
- Identify what kind of job you want
- Get ready for a job interview
- Answer questions about the job interview process
- Pay for job training
- Pay for school that will prepare you for a job

How do I get help from DRS?

You need to apply for DRS services.

- Find the DRS office closest to you.
 - Use this link: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12>
 - Select “Rehabilitation Services” and enter what county you live in
 - *Example:* If you live in Chicago, select Cook County
 - Or call (877) 581-3690
 - Or complete an online application for service:
<https://wr.dhs.illinois.gov/wrpublic/wr/dynamic/referral.jsf>
- After contacting DRS, a counselor will contact you to set up an appointment to complete the application process. During this appointment, the counselor will discuss your goals, the nature of your disability, and the services that DRS can provide.

What do I need for my first DRS appointment?

- Proof of your disability (medical record, audiogram, etc.)
- If you get SSI/SSDI, bring a letter from the Social Security Administration saying how much you get in SSI/SSDI
- Think about your goals
 - What kind of school or training program do you want to go to?
 - What kind of do job you want to have?

What happens if DRS denies me services?

- DRS will send you a letter saying that it is denying your request for services.
- You can appeal DRS's decision.
 - **Important:** You only have **30 days** from the date you get DRS's denial letter. It is important not to miss this deadline.
 - More information about your appeal rights:
<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=52318>
- You can contact the Client Assistance Program to ask for help.

What is the Client Assistance Program?

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is another state agency that is part of the Illinois Department of Human Services. CAP helps DRS customers who are having problems with DRS.

CAP may be able to help you:

- Get the DRS services you needs
- File an appeal

You can reach CAP at: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=41029>

What else can I do if I am not getting the DRS services that I need?

You can contact **Equip for Equality** for free legal assistance.

- Telephone: (312) 341-0022 or 800-537-2632
- Email: contactus@equipforequality.org
- Online intake form: <https://www.equipforequality.org/about/contact-us/online-intake-form/>

What kind of problems should I call Equip for Equality about?

- Your counselor does not respond to your phone calls or emails

- Your counselor is not helping you with your goals
- You asked for help to go to school and your counselor said no
- You want help with filing an appeal because you do not agree with your counselor's decision
- You want a lawyer to help you with an appeal hearing with DRS so you can get the assistance you are asking for from DRS

Where can I learn more about DRS?

- DRS Website: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29764>



DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION? CONTACT THE HELPLINE FOR FREE LEGAL ADVICE

Equip for Equality's Employment Rights Helpline

1-844-RIGHTS-9 (toll free) or (844) 744-4879

800-610-2779 (tty)

employment@equipforequality.org

www.equipforequality.org/employment

This resource material is intended as a guide for people with disabilities. Nothing written here shall be understood to be legal advice. For specific legal advice, an attorney should be consulted.

Equip for Equality, an independent nonprofit organization, is the Illinois state Protection & Advocacy System whose mission is to advance the human and civil rights of children and adults with disabilities. The Employment Rights Helpline seeks to empower individuals with disabilities to advocate effectively. This publication is made possible by funding support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration; and the Social Security Administration. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of Equip for Equality and do not necessarily represent the official views of any of these agencies.

This publication is made possible by a grant from the Social Security Administration. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not represent the official views of the Social Security Administration. This document was disseminated at U.S. taxpayer expense.