



**MINNESOTA DISABILITY LAW CENTER**  
**Duluth   Fertile   Mankato   Minneapolis**

**Top 10 Self-Advocacy Tips for Receiving Services from  
Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB)**

**1. You can apply for services as many times as you want.**

You can receive VRS or SSB services as many times as you need. You can always reapply even if you received services before or if VRS/SSB closed your file.

**2. You can give VRS or SSB more evidence about your disability if you are placed on the waiting list but think your disability is more severe than the agency realized.**

As of January 2019, VRS and SSB are only able to serve some of the people who have applied for services. You may be able to get services sooner if VRS or SSB know about all of your physical and mental impairments, and how severe they are.

**3. You have the right to informed choice while you are working with VRS or SSB.**

You will choose a job goal after talking with your counselor about your interests and abilities and what jobs would be a good match. Your counselor should tell you about how they can help you achieve your job goal, what services are available, and from which service providers you can choose.

**4. You must have a written employment plan to receive services and VRS or SSB must approve services before you receive them.**

You and your counselor will develop an employment plan within 90 days of being determined eligible for immediate services or after coming off of the waiting list. VRS/SSB will **not** pay for services that happened before the date of the employment plan, and VRS/SSB will **only** pay for services that they approved.

**5. Make sure all of the services that you and your counselor agree on are listed in the written employment plan.**

It's important that the employment plan include everything you and your counselor think you need to meet your job goal, so everyone is on the same page about the services you will receive and for which services VRS/SSB will pay. The employment plan must include a deadline for you to reach your job goal and for VRS/SSB to start providing services. You may ask to include other benchmarks in the plan if you think that would be helpful. Your employment plan can be changed later if you and your counselor agree you need more services or different services.

**6. Attend scheduled meetings and complete the tasks you agreed to do.**

You will play an important role in your employment plan and will have some responsibilities, such as attending meetings with your counselor, writing a resume or completing applications. It's important that you meet your responsibilities.

**7. You can ask for a different counselor if things aren't working out with your current counselor, but you don't have a legal right to a different counselor.**

If you are having difficulty working with your counselor and can't resolve the problems, sometimes asking a supervisor to change counselors can help. However, you don't have a legal right to a different counselor.

**8. If you disagree with your counselor's decision, you have the right to appeal in writing before the agency's deadline. You can also try mediation.**

Your appeal may be resolved after a supervisor's review, mediation or an impartial due process hearing. Be sure to request an appeal within 120 days if you are working with VRS or 60 days if you are working with SSB. Keep a copy of your appeal request for your records. Mediation may be an effective way to resolve problems.

**9. You have the right to see most of your VRS or SSB file.**

You have the right to see most of the information in your file or get a copy of your file. You may be charged copying fees. If you are denied access to some information, you can appeal the denial.

**10. You have the right to seek help from the Client Assistance Project.**

The Client Assistance Project (CAP) at the Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) provides free assistance and advocacy for people receiving rehabilitation services in Minnesota. CAP helps people with disabilities make sure they have the services they need from VRS/SSB. CAP is not a part of VRS or SSB and we do not provide rehabilitation services.

Want to Know More About VRS/SSB and Your Rights?

Look at MDLC's Fact Sheets at <http://www.lawhelpmn.org/issues/disability/>

Want to learn more about employment-related services and supports?

Watch MDLC's webinar at <http://tinyurl.com/mdlcvideoempl>

Need help with VRS, SSB or another legal problem?

Contact the Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) for free legal help statewide by calling our new client intake number:

1-800-292-4150 (Statewide) • 612-334-5970 (Twin Cities) • 612-332-4668 (TTY)