

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EXPERIENCE

Your actions are the key to a successful Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) experience. Along the way think of how to take charge of your program and to finish tasks that will lead to your success.

### **BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER WITH VR**

- Participate in writing your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
- Tell VR your needs and interests.
- Explore and understand your options before you make a choice.
- Read everything you are asked to sign. Ask your VR Counselor to explain paperwork.
- Make sure everything you and your VR Counselor agree on is included in your IPE. You will only get the services listed on your IPE.
- Talk to your VR Counselor about your responsibilities (ask if you are not sure).
- Know your rights as a VR client (VR will give you a paper that describes your rights – read it).

### **STAY IN CONTACT WITH VR STAFF**

- Tell your VR Counselor about any changes in your address, phone number or work status.
- Know what you need and ask for help if you don't feel that you are getting it.

### **HANDLE PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE**

- Give VR time to return phone calls.
- Focus on issues. Extreme anger or emotions get in the way of getting what you need.
- Ask your VR Counselor for the VR policy when you question or disagree with a decision he/she makes.
- Politely contact the office supervisor when you have a problem with the VR Counselor.
- Remember that your VR Counselor is working with you to help you reach your goals.

### **BE ORGANIZED**

- Ask your VR Counselor for copies of all paperwork and keep them together in a folder.
- Keep a calendar and mark appointment dates and times. *Never miss an appointment* with your VR Counselor.
- If an emergency comes up, call your VR Counselor ahead of time.
- Take notes during meetings. Keep a record of phone calls with your VR Counselor. Keep all e-mails that you send to, or receive from, your VR Counselor.

### **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WHEN YOU CANNOT RESOLVE A PROBLEM WITH VR**

- Contact your client assistance program (CAP) for help. CAP is part of Disability Rights Tennessee. You can reach CAP at 800.342.1660 or [gethelp@disabilityrightstn.org](mailto:gethelp@disabilityrightstn.org).
- You can appeal any VR decision that affects your VR services. Your appeal *must be filed with VR within 30 days* after the notice of the VR decision that you do not like.