Tip of the Hat from CAP

Our last "Tip of the Hat" talked about preparing for a new semester of school for clients of the Department of Rehabilitation Services. Not all DRS job seekers need schooling in order to achieve their Employment Outcome, but some do.

August/September is time for the fall semester, but December/January is also a time for preparations for school. This time the spring semester is upon us. The same things we suggested before are applicable now.

Let's recap. Before the Department of Rehabilitation Services can pay for a new semester of work, they must have a written grade report from the previous semester if you are already in school. You must earn at least a 2.0 grade point average on a 4 point scale in order for the department to finance the next semester.

If you do not achieve a 2.0 grade average, the agency will not pay for another semester until you have achieved a 2.0 grade average for work you pay for. As we said in the last "Tip of the Hat", lower grades cost you money.

If the department is going to pay for the upcoming semester, you need to provide them enrollment information for the new semester including cost of coursework and the number and title of classes you will take. In the spring and fall you must enroll in at least 12 hours of coursework. Summer is less.

Tuition, books and fees must be in writing in order for the agency to complete an authorization.

You must also provide a printout of your textbooks and their cost before DRS will authorize payment. The same goes for fees. Tuition, books and fees must be in writing in order for the agency to complete an authorization.

Sometimes DRS will do a direct-pay authorization, and sometimes they will do a client-pay authorization. This goes for all authorizations—not just authorizations for schooling.

In a direct-pay authorization, the department will send a check directly to a contracted vendor to pay for whatever service or equipment you are going to get. They need to have a contract with that vendor in order to issue a check directly.

If DRS does not have a contract with a particular vendor, they may issue a check directly to you the client. In that case, you will be responsible to pay the vendor for the service, collect the receipt and present it to your DRS counselor.

When you are directly given money by the department, there is a big responsibility on you. Many DRS job seekers are living on a shoestring budget, and a check in hand for $800 or whatever amount is a huge temptation.

Why don't I get Uncle Joe to fix my car and use the money to pay the rent? This is a bad idea for many reasons. First of all reasons is that there will be consequences in the services you need to get employed in the field of your choice.

You must provide receipts to equal the amount of the check issued to you. If you do not provide receipts, your services which cost money will be discontinued until you either provide the receipts or pay back the money. Nobody wants that to happen.

Receipts are very important. They provide documentation that you have used money correctly. They also demonstrate the Department of Rehabilitation Services is using federal and state money properly. DRS gets audited on a regular basis.

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Working closely with your DRS counselor will eliminate a lot of the pitfalls which can occur. Ask questions when you don't understand something. Ask questions to better find out how the program works, and don't hesitate to ask the Client Assistance Program about anything having to do with the agency as a whole or your case in particular.

Call 405-521-3756 #7. CAP is here to serve you. We want to be a part of your team so you can get a job which is meaningful and meets your needs. Never lose sight of that final goal. Everything else is just a step on the way.