

## **A Tip of the Hat from CAP**

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) is a program authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended to monitor services provided to job seekers within the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). CAP exists to insure that clients receive services according to law and policy.

Many states with a larger population have multiple people working in the CAP program, but in Oklahoma one person serves the entire state. CAP has been in existence since 1984, and I have served in this capacity for four years. In the discharge of my responsibilities, I work with many DRS clients and many DRS staff on all kinds of concerns.

Learning about how the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services works can help you navigate the DRS system and get your needs met. We will use *A Tip of the Hat from CAP* to share knowledge and experience which can make a difference for you. We will post a new edition every month on our website during the first week. Our website is <https://www.ok.gov/odc>.

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## **My Counselor and I Don't Get Along**

“But my counselor and I don't get along.” I heard this just today, and I recognize that behind that statement is a lot of hurt. Someone has dismissed your request lightly or ignored it. Someone has said something which is very offensive or used a belittling tone of voice. People have feelings.

How might you respond to that? “When you said \_\_\_\_, did you mean this \_\_\_\_?” It is OK to ask for clarification to something you perceive as hurtful. Sometimes you will find that the individual did not mean what was said. Sometimes they’ll back off their words if you respectfully challenge them.

But let’s say the DRS staff does not back off their words nor do they feel they owe you an apology. What then? Now is the time to ask the question, “Just how important is it?” How important is it if your DRS counselor and you do not get along?

Let’s take this from a positive viewpoint. What is really important in your DRS case? As the director of the Client Assistance Program in Oklahoma, there is one thing I think is supremely important.

Are you receiving the supports you need from DRS to achieve the Employment Outcome of your choice? If you want to be a Drug and Alcohol Counselor and the agency refuses to pay for your education, there may be a problem. If you want to be a plumber and the agency refuses to pay for your professional license, there may be a problem.

You document the meeting where you were refused a certain service. You keep that closure letter you received from DRS and use it to develop a case that the agency has not acted according to law and policy. You share that documentation/letter with the Client Assistance Program and ask our assistance if you choose.

DRS is about supporting people with disabilities in the Employment Outcome of their choice. They have been given a mission by the Oklahoma Legislature to provide services to people with disabilities just like you.

If you have information or documentation that the agency is not serving their mission, that is very important. Share that information with CAP or DRS administration and ask for an administrative review.

It is possible to work with a DRS counselor even if you do not get along. It is not as pleasant, but it can be done as long as that DRS staff works with you to get employed. That is the final outcome for everyone.

You want to get a job. DRS wants you to get a job. The Client Assistance Program wants you to achieve the Employment Outcome of your choice. Let's work together on a common outcome.

William Ginn

Client Assistance Program

Call-out box:

People have feelings.