***Vocational rehabilitation (VR) services are specialized services that help***

***individuals with disabilities get or keep a job***

You have the right to have a parent, friend, guardian, advocate, or other representative attend any meetings with OOD Staff or vocational rehabilitation (VR) Contractors.

**Informed Choice:**A staff person from OOD or a VR Contractor will facilitate informed choice discussions with you throughout the VR process. Together we will review and discuss options for your employment outcome, service needs, and providers. You have the right to give your input and feedback about the choices and decisions you feel are the best for you, with the help of your representative, if applicable, and OOD Staff or VR Contractors.

**Appeal Rights:** You may not agree with OOD on an action or decision concerning your eligibility, employment outcome, case closure, or the provision or denial of services. You have the right to appeal any of these OOD actions or decisions and receive an impartial hearing. You will continue to receive services while your appeal is pending.

* You may file an appeal within thirty (30) days of receiving notice of any of the above OOD actions or decisions. Your appeal must be sent, in writing, to OOD’s Director. Written notice includes filling out OOD’s “Vocational Rehabilitation Appeal Form” (80-VR-12.A), writing a letter, sending an email, or any other comparable method. Your written appeal must be mailed **or** emailed to the appropriate address listed below:

***By Regular Mail: By Electronic Mail (email):***

Director Kevin L. Miller Appeals@ood.ohio.gov

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

150 E. Campus View, Suite., 300

Columbus, Ohio 43235

* OOD will do the following once it receives and accepts your written appeal.
	+ OOD Legal staff will schedule a “Fair Hearing” within sixty (60) calendar days of receipt of your written appeal. You will receive a “Notice of Opportunity for Hearing” letter with the date and time of your Fair Hearing.
* A “Fair Hearing” is a formal hearing held in Columbus, Ohio, or through videoconference (requires prior OOD approval), before an impartial Hearing Officer where each side can present documents as evidence and call witnesses to testify. All witness testimony is under oath and the entire hearing will be recorded.
	+ While you are waiting on your Fair Hearing date, an OOD staff person will contact you to offer you an informal administrative review. An informal administrative review will take place within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the receipt of your written appeal if you agree to participate.
		- An informal administrative review is an informal meeting with a manager from OOD to discuss your disagreement with the action or decision that led to your appeal. If this meeting does not result in an agreement, your Fair Hearing will still go forward as planned. A written summary of the informal administrative review will be sent to you within ten (10) calendar days after the meeting. OOD will either offer a solution to address your disagreement(s) or inform you that we do not have a solution.
* If you accept the offered solution of your appeal, you must withdraw your appeal, in writing, to the Director by signing OOD’s “Withdrawal of Appeal” form (80-VR-12.C) or sending an email to withdraw your appeal. The appeal withdrawal form will be sent to you along with a summary of the informal administrative review. Your appeal will proceed to a Fair Hearing unless your appeal is withdrawn.
* In addition to an informal administrative review, “mediation” may be requested any time before the Fair Hearing is held, however, both parties must agree to mediation. To request mediation, contact the OOD Legal Department at (800) 282-4536 or send an email to: Appeals@ood.ohio.gov. Mediation and the informal administrative review do not extend the sixty (60) day time limit to resolve your concerns.

You may receive assistance with the appeal process by contacting the Client Assistance Program (CAP) at Disability Rights Ohio. Disability Rights Ohio can be reached by calling:

**614-466-7264 or Toll Free at 1-800-282-9181 or 1-800-858-3542 (TTY)**

You may also visit their website at [**www.disabilityrightsohio.org**](http://www.disabilityrightsohio.org)

**Civil Rights:** You have the right to file a civil rights complaint if you believe you are being treated unfairly because of your race, color, religion, national origin/ancestry, disability, age (40 years or older), sexual orientation, gender or sex, veteran or military status, and/or genetic information or in any manner prohibited by law. If this is the case, you may file a complaint with OOD’s Division of Human Resources, Equal Employment Opportunity office by calling **1-800-282-4536**. You may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

**Definitions**

**VR Contractors** – entities or individuals that OOD contracts with to provide specific services to VR applicants or eligible individuals. A “Coordinator” is normally the contractor staff who will handle the majority of your case management.

**OOD Staff** – any person who works for Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities. A “Counselor” and/or “Caseload Assistant” are normally the individuals who will handle the majority of your case management.