# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual A-200: Customer Rights and Legal Issues

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## A-202: Basic Customer Rights

VR customers are afforded certain basic rights, which include the right to:

* informed choice;
* be informed in writing of their rights;
* services that are nondiscriminatory;
* protection of personal information contained in the division's records, and
* appeal decisions regarding their planned services or their eligibility for such services.

Applicant and customer rights applicable to each VR program are summarized in a brochure titled Vocational Rehabilitation Appeal Procedures - Can We Talk? (PDF). A copy of the brochure is to be provided to the customer, including those who are potentially eligible, at a minimum:

* at application (or when the VR1820 is completed for potentially eligible customers);
* at the time of initial plan development or IPE amendment;
* when services are being denied, reduced, suspended, or terminated; and
* upon applicant/customer request.

A case note must be entered in RHW documenting the date and method the brochure was given to the customer.

For a detailed description of the appeals process, see VRSM A-204: Appeals and Hearings in this chapter.

## A-204: Appeals and Hearings

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### A-204-7: Client Assistance Program

In addition to providing information about the availability of a CAP during the IPE process, VR must provide this information in any determination provided to the customer and document in a case note the date and method the information was provided. Information specific to the hearings process is also provided by the hearings coordinator. The required information for the appellant must include the [CAP](https://www.disabilityrightstx.org/en/handout/vocational-rehabilitation-system-in-texas-2/) office intake number, which is 800-252-9108.

Information about the availability of CAP must also be provided to customers who are potentially eligible when they complete the VR1820.

Other free legal services and referrals may be available through [Texas Legal Services Center](http://www.tlsc.org/), [Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans](http://www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Texas_Lawyers_for_Texas_Veterans), or, depending on the customer's location:

* [Legal Aid of Northwest Texas](https://internet.lanwt.org/home), which serves the Dallas/Fort Worth area and Northwest Texas;
* [Lone Star Legal Aid](http://www.lonestarlegal.org/), which serves the Houston area and East Texas; or
* [Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid](http://www.trla.org/), which serves the Austin/San Antonio area, El Paso area, and South Texas.

### A-204-8: Communications with the Impartial Hearing Officer

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## A-214: Harm to Self and Others

### A-214-1: Obligation to Report

Communications between a customer and a professional, and records of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a customer that are created or maintained by a professional, are confidential. However, a professional may disclose confidential information:

1. to a governmental agency if the disclosure is required or authorized by law;
2. to medical or law enforcement personnel if the professional determines that there is a probability of imminent physical injury by the customer to the customer or others or there is a probability of immediate mental or emotional injury to the customer;
3. to other professionals and personnel under the professionals' direction who participate in the diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of the customer; or
4. to a parent if the customer is a minor, or a guardian if the customer has been adjudicated as incompetent to manage the customer’s personal affairs.

For more information on reporting abuse, exploitation, and neglect refer to A-202-3: Allegations of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation and A-213: Incident Reporting and Documentation. The expectation is that each employee will treat all customers with dignity and professionalism.

### A-214-2: Responding to Customers Who Threaten to Harm Themselves or Others

A serious incident is one that threatens or impairs the basic health, safety, or well-being of any customer receiving services. When a customer demonstrates or expresses a threat to harm themselves or others, law enforcement must be contacted immediately. For information on responding to a potential threat of harm refer to the [VR Psychological Services intranet page.](https://intra.twc.texas.gov/intranet/vrs/html/behavioral-health.html)