

FOR WHAT TYPE OF MEETING/ HEARING CAN A CSS BE REQUESTED?

A CSS may be authorized to assist a qualified individual at any hearing or judicial proceeding interactive DCF or other State administrative meeting. Services are not provided for defendants in criminal court.

CONTACT VCSP

VERMONT COMMUNICATION SUPPORT PROJECT

1-888-686-8277

csp@disabilityrightsvt.org

www.vermontcsp.org



VCSP

THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF CASES FOR VCSP SERVICES ARE:

- Divorce
- Parental Rights & Responsibilities
- Child Support
- Relief from Abuse & Stalking
- CHINS (children in need of care / supervision)
- Termination of Parental Rights
- Eviction
- Small Claims
- Probate / Guardianship
- DCF Meetings
- Attorney Meetings
- State Administrative Proceedings

“There are many disabilities that can affect a person’s ability to communicate. Navigating the judicial system or state meetings, whether the disability is visible or not, can present significant challenges that affect comprehension or the opportunity to fully participate. The work and expertise of a certified Communication Specialist ensures that people are being offered an equal opportunity.”

~ VCSP Communication Support
Specialist

VCSP is a project of Disability Rights Vermont. This project is made possible by a grant from the Vermont Agency of Human Services and with support from the Vermont Judiciary

VERMONT COMMUNICATION SUPPORT PROJECT

Serving individuals with **disability-related communication barriers** that may prevent them from fully participating in **civil, family, probate** and **small claims courts**, as well as **state and administrative proceedings** and **meetings**.

WHAT WE DO

The Vermont Communication Support Project assists individuals with disabilities that impact their ability to communicate by assigning Communication Support Specialists to provide support in court, administrative proceedings and/or meetings that may include attorneys, state personnel or providers.

WHAT IS A COMMUNICATION SUPPORT SPECIALIST (CSS)?

A Communication Support Specialist is an individual specifically trained to understand the communication needs of people with disabilities such as learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, mental health disorders, psychiatric disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, aphasia and others, including stroke and disease related disabilities.

A CSS understands the challenges and barriers to effective communication and can help to overcome those barriers with effective accommodations.

WHAT DO SERVICES LOOK LIKE?



"The VCSP's services have been outstanding in quality and a great boon to the clients themselves, as well as to the fair administration of the legal system in their cases. With skill and understanding, the VCSP communication specialists help clients better understand the situations before them, which greatly support their navigation and communication with elements of the social and judicial systems."

~ Jonathan Heppell, Esq.

Clients say: "This is a very respectful service that is important." – "I have a hard time understanding and they really help me understand." – "I think this is a great service, especially for people like me who need it."

COMMUNICATION PLAN & SUPPORTS

Everyone will have different needs depending on how their disability affects communication but some common supports include:

- A review of the purpose of the meeting or hearing and who is likely to be present.
- Process and etiquette of the meeting and why it is important.
- Support for comprehension
- Support in making lists, prioritizing questions and information
- Role-play to ease anxiety
- Needs around de-escalation and emotional support
- Agreement on verbal cues to maintain focus / Visual cues to maintain focus
- Review of the steps required to connect remotely
- Technology that makes it easier to connect to a remote meeting



Communication may include comprehension, ability to express thoughts and feelings, ability to manage behavior in a way that may allow for effective communication, ability to understand written documentation, or any other variable involved with imparting or exchanging information in an interactive setting such as a Court hearing or DCF meeting.

- VCSP SERVICES ARE CONFIDENTIAL
- VCSP SERVICES ARE FREE FOR CLIENTS

IF YOU THINK YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW MAY NEED VCSP SERVICES CALL (888) 686-8277