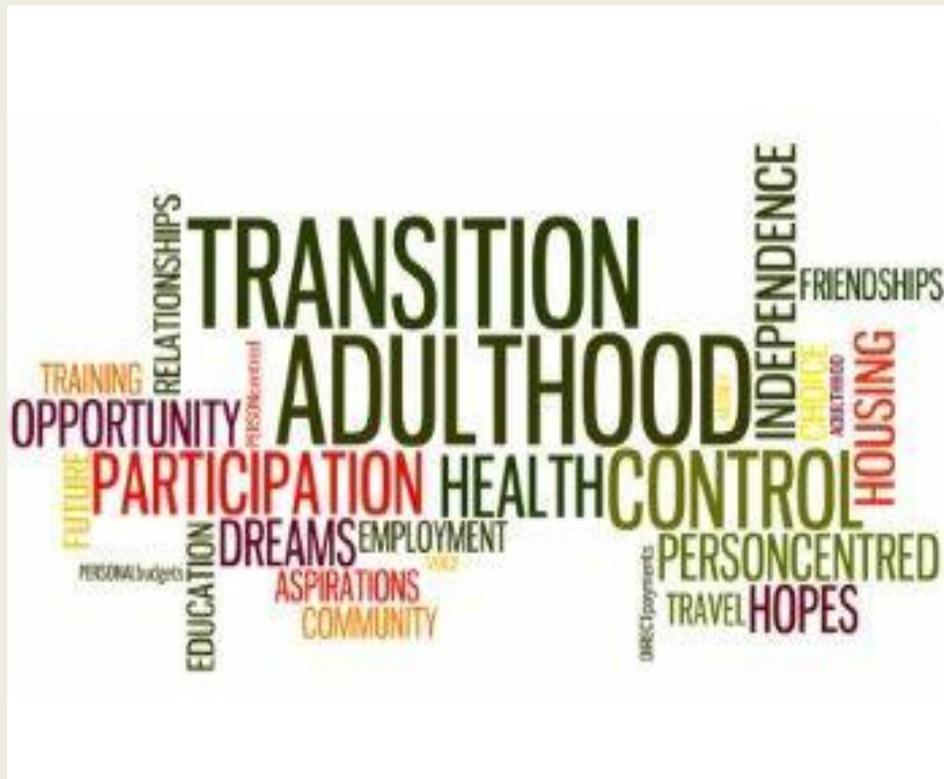


# Transition Planning Guide for Individuals with Disabilities



Maryland State Department of Education

Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services



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Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

## How to Use this Guide

The Maryland State Department of Education *Transition Planning Guide for Individuals with Disabilities* provides information to students, parents/guardians, educators, and community agencies about the transition process. Although every student will have individualized transition goals and outcomes, this guide provides “preliminary” information about the requirements of the transition process under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) as well as recommended strategies and resources to acquire a positive outcome.

This guide will provide details about the following topics:

- Transition Planning (leading to employment and postsecondary education outcomes, according to IDEA)
- Roles and Involvement of Partners
- Requirements for the Maryland High School Diploma and the Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion
- Maryland Summary of Performance (formerly Maryland Exit Document)
- Entitlement vs. Eligibility
- Age of Majority
- Maryland Adult Service Agencies
  1. Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)
  2. Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)
  3. Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)
  4. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation – Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DLLR)
- Benefits
- Postsecondary Education/Disability Support Services
- Transportation/Travel Training
- Healthcare
- Community Access
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  2. Guardianship
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  4. Financial Planning/Special Needs Trusts/Estate Planning
- Transition Process: Agency Linkage

Appendix A: Recommended Timeline(s)

Appendix B: Postsecondary Education/Disability Support Services FAQs

Appendix C: Specific Populations/Resources

Appendix D: Frequently Used Acronyms and Glossary

## What is Transition Planning?

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services *Transition Planning Guide* focuses on the movement of individuals with disabilities from school to postsecondary outcomes. A major component of secondary transition planning is that the sequential transition activities and services are person-centered and drive the Individual Education Program (IEP). For students to successfully exit high school prepared for college, career, and community, early planning is crucial. In Maryland, transition planning and the delivery of transition services begins during the IEP year in which the student turns 14 years of age.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that the purpose of the legislation is “to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further employment and independent living.” The law stresses the need for educators, parents, and community agencies to work together to support the student as he or she works toward postsecondary goals and outcomes. Transition services must be provided to assist the student in the attainment of skills necessary to reach his/her postsecondary goals.

IDEA 2004 defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that are:

- designed to be within a results-oriented process, focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of an individual with a disability to facilitate their movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education; vocational education; integrated employment; continuing and adult education; adult services; independent living or community participation;
- based on the individual's needs, taking into account their strengths, preferences, and interests; and;
- designed to include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

# Transition Planning

The goal of transition planning is to support students with disabilities as they progress through school and prepare for life in the adult world. This includes planning for college, work, transportation, living arrangements, health care, and daily living. The adult activities could be a combination of any of the following:

- Self-Determination and Advocacy
- Community participation
- Postsecondary education
- Employment training
- Competitive employment
- Independent living
- Adult service linkages

Transition planning for a student's future begins as early as elementary school with career awareness and exploration activities. Formal transition planning begins through the IEP process the year the student turns 14 and drives the development of the IEP. Students, with support from parents and educators, identify postsecondary goals in the areas of employment, postsecondary education or employment training; and if appropriate, independent living. These postsecondary goals are based upon the results of age appropriate transition assessments.

**Why is a transition plan needed?** The transition plan is designed to ensure that the student will be provided with the necessary skills and services to make a smooth transition from school to adult life. For students with an IEP, public school systems and nonpublic schools provide educational supports that could include assistive technology, job training, personal assistance, and other supports deemed appropriate by the IEP team. When students exit high school, these supports are **not** automatically provided, even if they were available through the school years. (See Section on Eligibility and Entitlement)

## **What does transition planning include?**

The transition planning process occurs when students with IEPs identify what they will do after graduation and consider the skills, training, education, and/or resources needed to reach these goals. It also includes:

- Identifying and applying to the appropriate adult service agencies.
- Gathering documents needed for future colleges, employers, or service providers.
- Determining the training transition activities and supports needed to reasonably enable the student to reach these goals.

### **When does planning for transition begin?**

Transition planning begins the year the student turns 14, if not earlier. At this time a formal Transition Plan that includes the student's postsecondary goals and transition services must be developed and included in the IEP. This may sound very early, but careful planning is needed if students are to acquire the skills and experiences necessary to help them achieve their postsecondary goals. Starting transition planning at age 14 gives the student time to explore their postsecondary goal choices and modify or change them based on transition experiences and acquired knowledge. It will also provide time to apply for postsecondary services and supports such as: academic supports in college, job coaching, personal care assistance, subsidized housing, or other adult services.

## Roles and Involvement of Partners

*Just as important as the identification of the postsecondary goals are the various stakeholders that could support the transition process and assist the student in achieving the identified goals.* Stakeholders come to the transition planning table with a variety of roles and responsibilities. These may vary across local school systems.

Partners	Roles/Responsibilities
<b>Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in transition planning</li> <li>● Identify strengths and challenges</li> <li>● Express interests and preferences</li> <li>● Identify postsecondary goals</li> <li>● Participate in transition activities identified in the IEP</li> </ul>
<b>Parents/Guardians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in IEP and transition planning meetings</li> <li>● Share student’s strengths, interests, and support needs with IEP team</li> <li>● Help student access other transition partners</li> <li>● Advocate for student’s goals</li> <li>● Share contacts and networks for potential job opportunities</li> <li>● Provide feedback to transition partners</li> <li>● Review transition timeline and ask for supports as needed</li> <li>● Complete applications to appropriate state agencies according to the agency’s timeline</li> </ul>
<b>School Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Secure parent/guardian permission to communicate with state/community agencies</li> <li>● Invite partners to IEP meetings when transition is discussed</li> <li>● Assist parent/guardians in applying for postsecondary services from state agencies such as <u>Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)</u>, <u>Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)</u>, and <u>Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)</u></li> <li>● Provide instruction and work experiences in authentic work environments if indicated in student’s IEP</li> <li>● Work collaboratively with DORS to ensure eligible students are identified and receive employment readiness training</li> <li>● Provide informational meetings for parents regarding aspects of transition planning and the application process/timeline for state agencies that may provide services to the student upon exit from the school system</li> <li>● Document and report student progress and status after exit</li> </ul>

<b>Partners</b>	<b>Roles/Responsibilities</b>
<b>Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in transition planning meetings/attend IEP meetings when possible</li> <li>● Begin working with eligible students prior to their last year of high school to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)</li> <li>● Identify services necessary for successful transition to postsecondary education and/or employment</li> <li>● Contract with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to support students with job development and employment services</li> <li>● Provide Pre-Employment Training Services (Pre-ETS) to eligible high school students age 14-22 in the areas of Job Exploration Counseling, Work-based Learning Experiences, Instruction in Self-advocacy, Counseling for Opportunity in Postsecondary Education, and Workplace Readiness Training</li> </ul>
<b>Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in transition planning</li> <li>● Collaborate with other transition partners to ensure that students have appropriate documentation to qualify and access services</li> <li>● Provide long-term funding for eligible individuals upon school exit</li> <li>● Contract with a Coordinator of Community Services(CCS) to assist with the transition from school to the adult world</li> </ul>
<b>Adult Service Providers/Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in transition planning</li> <li>● Enter into contractual agreements with school systems and DORS to facilitate work-based experiences and provide job development and job coaching before and after school exit</li> <li>● Provide services and supports for DORS and DDA clients to provide job development and job coaching upon exiting high school</li> </ul>
<b>Colleges/Postsecondary Education Training Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage with student to identify accommodations and support needs in collaboration with Disability Support Services on the college campus</li> <li>● Provide access and support for campus activities, courses, and employment</li> </ul>

# **Requirements for the Maryland High School Diploma and the Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion**

## **Maryland High School Diploma**

*(See COMAR 13A.03.02.09)*

- A Maryland High School Diploma shall be awarded to a student who:
  - (a) Completes the enrollment, credit, and services requirements.
  - (b) Local school systems may establish additional credit requirements or add endorsements to the diploma as incentive for students to meet locally established requirements beyond the minimums specified by the State.
- For more information visit  
<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Testing/GradRegFAQ051517.pdf>

## **Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion**

*(See COMAR 13A.03.02.09D)*

- The Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion shall be awarded only to students with disabilities who cannot meet the requirements for a diploma but who meet the following standards:
  - (a) The student is enrolled in an education program for at least 4 years beyond grade 8 or its age equivalent, and is determined by an IEP team, with the agreement of the parents of the student with disabilities, to have developed appropriate skills for the individual to enter the world of work, act responsibly as a citizen, and enjoy a fulfilling life, including but not limited to:
    - Gainful employment;
    - Post-secondary education and training;
    - Supported employment; and
    - Other services that are integrated in the community; or
  - (b) The student has been enrolled in an education program for 4 years beyond grade 8 or its age equivalent and will have reached age 21 before the first day of the next school year.
- An Exit Document (Maryland Summary of Performance) that describes the student's skills shall accompany the Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion.
- The final decision to award a student with disabilities a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion will not be made until after the beginning of the student's last year in high school.
- A student with significant cognitive disability may not meet high school graduation requirements if a student:
  - (a) Participates in an Alternative Assessment based on Alternative Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS); and
  - (b) Continues to receive instruction based on Alternative Academic Achievement Standards through high school.
- If a student participates in a graduation ceremony prior to the completion of the student's education program, at the ceremony the school system shall issue to the student a Certificate of Achievement or other similarly titled certificate in place of a diploma.

## **Maryland Summary of Performance (MSOP)**

Maryland provides students with IEPs a Summary of Performance (MSOP) before they transition from school to post school activities. The SOP is required under the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. In Maryland, this document is given to all students with IEPs before they exit with a Maryland High School Diploma or Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion (*See* COMAR 13A.03.02.09E (2).)

### **Why is the Maryland Summary of Performance (MSOP) important?**

The Maryland Summary of Performance provides exiting students with IEPs important information that they may use as they transition from school to postsecondary activities. These activities may include employment, postsecondary education, supported employment, or independent living provided by community rehabilitation providers. The MSOP will be generated as part of the student's IEP, and the information that is gathered is based on input from the student, the family, and the IEP team.

The MSOP may provide potential employers, postsecondary education institutions, and adult service provider's meaningful information about the young adult's skills, strengths, and any supports that he/she may need to be successful. There are four parts to the Maryland Summary of Performance. Each part is listed below.

Part 1- Background Information

Part 2- Student's Postsecondary Goals

Part 3- Summary of Performance (Academic, Cognitive, and Functional Levels)

Part 4- Recommendations in Meeting Postsecondary Goals

### **Where can we get more information?**

For more information on the Maryland Summary of Performance, please visit:

<https://marylandlearninglinks.org/maryland-summary-performance-msop/>.

## **Entitlement vs. Eligibility**

Understanding the difference between the entitlement of public education and the eligibility of adult services can be very confusing. In Maryland, a young adult with a disability who is receiving special education services is ENTITLED to a free, appropriate, public education through the school year in which they turn 21 years of age or has met the requirements for a Maryland High School Diploma or Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion. These services are documented within the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as determined by the IEP team and is funded by the local school system.

A student who exits the school system with a Maryland High School Diploma or Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion is no longer entitled to services. At this point individuals must apply for adult services to see if they are ELIGIBLE to receive them. In addition to meeting eligibility criteria, funding must be available to receive services and supports from adult service agencies (e.g. DORS, DDA, and BHA). {See Chart below.}

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Entitlement (While enrolled in school)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Eligibility (ADA &amp; Section 504) (After exit from school or age 21)</b></p>
<p>Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is an “entitlement” law intended to guarantee students with disabilities a free, appropriate primary and secondary education.</p>	<p>The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is about access. The goal of Section 504 and the ADA is to remove barriers and to guarantee reasonable accommodations. Persons with disabilities become the sole point of contact, not the parent or family.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free, appropriate public education (FAPE)</li> <li>• Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)</li> <li>• Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)</li> <li>• Related Services</li> <li>• Preparation for further education, employment, and independent living</li> <li>• Entitled to services that will help students meet success in school</li> <li>• Services are accessed through the school system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility for postsecondary services is not guaranteed</li> <li>• Individuals must qualify for services</li> <li>• Services depend on funding and availability</li> <li>• Postsecondary services only ensure individuals are provided equal access</li> <li>• Responsibility to obtain services is on the individual/parent/guardian</li> <li>• Services may be provided <b>IF</b> there is enough staff, capacity at the facility, and/or funds to provide services</li> <li>• Self-advocacy is necessary to obtain accommodations</li> </ul>

## Age of Majority

The Age of Majority is the legally defined age at which a person is considered an adult, with all the rights and responsibilities of adulthood. When the term *age of majority* is used, it generally refers to when a young person reaches the age where one is considered to be an adult. In Maryland, that age is 18. At least one year prior to reaching age 18, an individual must be informed of their rights under IDEA. In Maryland, educational decision making does not automatically transfer to a student with a disability at the age of majority except under limited circumstances. (See COMAR 13A.05.01.07C (7).)

## Maryland State Adult Service Agencies

The following section describes four state agencies that may provide services or supports for eligible individuals. Individuals must meet specific eligibility criteria for each agency. A brief summary of the four state agencies and their eligibility criteria is provided below.

### **Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**

<http://www.dors.maryland.gov>

- **What does DORS do?** DORS administers the vocational rehabilitation program in Maryland promoting employment, independence, and self-sufficiency for individuals with significant disabilities. Transition counselors who work specifically with students who have significant disabilities, provide services to help them obtain and maintain employment. DORS transition counselors work with eligible students during their last two years of school to both provide and arrange for services such as career counseling and decision making, assistive technology, job preparation, post-secondary education assistance (vocational training, community college, or university), job placement services, and job coaching services. DORS maintains cooperative agreements with each local school district in Maryland and further assigns a DORS transition counselor to every public high school statewide. Under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), there is a larger role for DORS to play for individuals in transition. In fact, pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) are provided to high school students with disabilities beginning at age 14.
- **Who is eligible?** Individuals are eligible for DORS services if they (1) have a physical or mental impairment, which constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, (2) can benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome, and (3) require vocational services to achieve employment. Due to resource limitations, DORS provides services only to individuals with “significant” and “most significant” disabilities. These are individuals who will require multiple services over an extended period of time and whose impairments seriously limit one or more functional capacities such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, or work skills. There may be a waiting list for services.
- **When should you apply?** DORS encourages referrals during the fall of the junior year for those students working toward a diploma, and the fall of the next to last year of high school for those working toward a certificate. Working with students during their last two years of high school gives DORS transition counselors ample time to provide transition planning and help ensure a smooth transition from school to post-secondary education or employment. \*Beginning in 2014 through federal legislation, DORS is required to provide pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities who have an IEP or a Section 504 plan beginning at age 14. Pre-ETS include activities such as self-advocacy, job exploration counseling, work-based learning

experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, and workplace readiness.

For more information visit:

[http://dors.maryland.gov/Brochures/Pre-ETS\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://dors.maryland.gov/Brochures/Pre-ETS_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

- **Where to apply?** You can complete a DORS referral online at: <http://www.dors.maryland.gov/consumers/Pages/referral.aspx> or call 1-888-554-0334 for more information.

### **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)**

<https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx>

- **What does DDA do?** DDA funds community-based services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. These services and supports may include employment supports, day programs, transportation, assistive technology, family support services, community-based and residential living programs, and personal care assistance. DDA also provides services specifically designed for transitioning youth with disabilities, including supported employment, day programs, and community supports.
- **Who is eligible?**
  - Individuals are eligible for DDA services if they have a developmental disability that:
    - causes physical or mental impairment,
    - started before the person was 22,
    - is permanent;
    - prevents the person from living independently without assistance,
    - qualifies for Medicaid.
  - For more information about DDA eligibility, visit <https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/eligibility.aspx>
- **When to apply?**
  - DDA encourages all potentially-eligible youth with a developmental disability to apply for services by their 14th birthday. If over age 14, students should apply before age 18.
- **Where to apply?** Visit <https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/apply.aspx> e.aspx or call DDA at 410-767-5600 for more information.

### **Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)**

<https://bha.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>

- **What does BHA do?** BHA is part of the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) that serves people with mental illness and/or problems with alcohol and drug use. Through its local agencies, called Core Service Agencies, BHA funds and administers programs including: psychiatric inpatient care, residential treatment, routine and intensive outpatient care, crisis services,

rehabilitation services, family support, supported housing and supported employment for people with mental illness. Some programs specifically for transition-aged youth are available in some regions.

- **Who is eligible?** People with mental health care needs who are Medicaid-eligible. In some cases, people with significant mental health needs who are not Medicaid-eligible for financial reasons may still qualify for assistance.
- **When to apply?** BHA provides some services for children and youth and adult services begin at age 18. Refer to <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx> for further information.
- **How to apply?** Note that if you are already enrolled in Medicaid, you do not need to enroll separately for mental health services. For more information, contact the BHA Office of Consumer Affairs at 410-402-8447 or your local Core Service Agency. You can find a listing of the agencies at the Maryland Association of Core Service Agencies, [www.marylandbehavioralhealth.org](http://www.marylandbehavioralhealth.org).

### **Office of Workforce and Development and Adult Learning, Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR)**

<http://www.dllr.state.md.us/>

- **What does DLLR do?** DLLR's Office of Workforce Development Youth Service Division provides programs and services to help young adults reach educational and employment goals. Through DLLR's local America's Job Centers and Workforce Investment Boards, DLLR provides career consultation, training, computer access, and other support services. Through funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Maryland's Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) in conjunction with the American Job Centers provides an array of employment services and connects customers to work-related training and education opportunities. WIOA affirms the Department's commitment to providing high quality services for youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in occupations in-demand, enrollment in postsecondary education, and attainment of industry recognized credentials in a career pathway that will lead to employment.
- **Who is eligible?** The Youth Services Division serves young adults, with or without disabilities, ages 14-24. The One Stop Career Centers are available to job-seekers of any age with or without disabilities.
- **How to access services?** To learn more about career exploration, training, and jobs, please visit DLLR's website at <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/county> or call 410-767-2173 to find a local American Job Center or visit the Maryland Workforce Exchange website: <https://mwejobs.maryland.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>

# Benefits

## Medicaid and Medicaid Waivers

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) administers Medicaid or Medical Assistance (MA). Both Medicaid and Medicaid Waiver programs can be important sources of health coverage, supplemental assistance, long term care, and at-home/community-based supports for people with disabilities.

- **What does Medicaid do?**
  - Provides healthcare coverage.
  - Provide additional funding through Medicaid Waiver Programs for personal care services such as: personal hygiene and grooming, toileting, eating, dressing, mobility, at-home medical care, and access to medical appointments.
- **Who is eligible for Medicaid?**
  - Generally, those individuals who are:
    - disabled
    - blind
    - caring for a child whose parent is unemployed, sick, or or deceased, or
    - meet the program's income requirements.
  - Eligibility for Medicaid in Maryland is determined by local Departments of Social Services
  - For more information visit:  
<https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Am%20I%20Eligible.aspx>  
<https://www.medicare.gov/people-like-me/disability/disability.html>
- **Medicaid Waiver Programs**

Maryland Medicaid's home and community-based services are offered through the regular Medicaid program and special Medicaid programs called "waivers." A waiver puts aside the eligibility requirements of the parents of a child with a disability and looks only at the income of the child.

- Each waiver has different eligibility criteria and each target a different population, such as older adults or people with a certain disability.
  - Services are **not** an entitlement.
  - Must be Maryland residents to apply and be determined eligible for DDA services.
  - Two groups of individuals are eligible for services.
    - Those with developmental disabilities and;
    - Those who have a severe, chronic disability which is caused by a physical or mental condition, other than a sole diagnosis of mental illness.
  - For more information visit  
<https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Am%20I%20Eligible.aspx>

- To learn more about Medicaid Waiver programs (including Community First Choice, Community Options, and Medical Personal Assistance) call 410-767-1739, or visit [https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/waiverprograms/Documents/Bluebook\\_032516\\_PRO\\_OF.pdf](https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/waiverprograms/Documents/Bluebook_032516_PRO_OF.pdf)
- For information about Home and Community Based Services, visit <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/waiverprograms/Pages/Home.aspx>
- **How to apply?**
  - To apply for Medicaid, Maryland residents visit their county or city Department of Social Services. There, they are interviewed and submit an application.
  - Visit <https://medicaid-help.org/Primary-Information> to help answer questions, check eligibility and assist in applying for Medicaid

## Social Security Administration Benefits for People with Disabilities

The Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income disability programs are the largest of several Federal programs that provide assistance to people with disabilities. While these two programs are different in many ways, both are administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and only individuals who have a disability and meet medical criteria may qualify for benefits under either program. Visit [Disability Secrets](#) for additional information and assistance with applying for Social Security benefits or appealing a disability decision.

### Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- **What does Supplemental Security Income (SSI) do?**  
The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. SSI is a Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues (*not* Social Security taxes):
  - Designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income
  - Provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter
    - Provides medical assistance (Medicaid) for beneficiaries to pay for hospital stays, doctor bills, prescription drugs, and other health costs.
    - SSI beneficiaries may also be eligible for food assistance
- **Who is eligible for SSI Benefits?**
  - Disabled; Blind; or Aged (65 and older); and who has limited income and limited resources.
  - Income and assets of families of children with disabilities are also considered when determining financial eligibility.
  - At 18 years of age the SSA considers **only** the individual's income and assets, not the income and assets of the parents.

- If a child has previously been turned down for SSI based on income, reapply for benefits after his/her 18th birthday when the parent's income will no longer be considered for eligibility purposes.
- Individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are automatically eligible to receive Medical Assistance.
- **How to Apply?**
  - File an Application with your local Department of Social Services in the city or county where you live.
  - Download an Application by visiting [www.dhr.state.md.us/fia/forms.htm](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/fia/forms.htm).
  - Obtain an application at your local Department of Social Services and local Health Department. One can also be mailed to you by calling 1-800-456-8900.
- **What if my application is denied?**
  - If your application has recently been denied, the Internet Appeal is a starting point to request a review of the decision about your eligibility for disability benefits.
  - If your application is denied for:
    - Medical reasons, you can complete and submit the required Appeal Request and Appeal Disability Report online.
    - Non-medical reasons, you should contact your local Social Security Office to request the review. You also may call the toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213, to request an appeal. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can call the toll-free TTY number, 1-800-325-0778.

## Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

- **What does Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) do?**  
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) pays benefits to you or certain members of your family if you are "insured," meaning that you worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes.
- **Who is eligible for SSI Benefits**
  - To qualify for SSDI, a person must be under 65 years old and have a qualifying severe disability as designated by the Social Security Administration.
  - An unmarried child may be eligible to receive benefits on a parent's work record if:
    - The child is under 18, with or without a disability; or
    - The child is 18-19 years old and a full-time student (no higher than grade 12); or
    - The child 18 or older with a disability that began before age 22 and meets the [definition of disability](#) for adults.

## Postsecondary Education/Disability Support Services

Understanding the difference between the high school and college experience, especially regarding the laws, is so important. While in high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) outlines how educational supports are provided. This is through the IEP process. When a student enters college (postsecondary education), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 guarantees the right of individuals with disabilities to receive reasonable accommodations in order to be successful in postsecondary education. The chart below lists the differences between high school and college.

High School	College
<b>Legal</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) <b>entitles</b> students with disabilities a free and appropriate education.</li> <li>IDEA is about <b>SUCCESS</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 guarantees reasonable accommodations.</li> <li>ADA is about <b>ACCESS</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Required Documentation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individualized Education Plan (IEP)</li> <li>Documentation focuses on determining whether student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in IDEA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High School IEP may not be sufficient.</li> <li>Student <u>may need to get an evaluation(s)</u> at own expense.</li> <li>Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations, and demonstrate the need for specific reasonable accommodations</li> </ul>
<b>Advocacy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are actively involved in advocating for appropriate services and supports for their children.</li> <li>Schools reach out to parents and their participation in the IEP process is required.</li> <li>Parents talk directly to their child’s teachers on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are expected to advocate for themselves. Parent involvement is not always actively sought, and may be discouraged at times.</li> <li>College faculty and staff do not typically communicate with parents directly without student consent.</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Education Programs and Supports</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The IEP Team, which includes the student, parent(s) and school district, develops the Individual Education Program (IEP) and must follow this legal document for services.</li> <li>Parent has access to student records and can participate in the accommodation process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no IEPs in college.</li> <li>The Disability Services Office will develop an accommodation plan based on documentation of disability that is provided by the student.</li> <li>Student must request accommodations from the college Disability Services Office each semester.</li> <li>Parent does not have access to student records without student’s written consent.</li> </ul>

It is important that students know their rights and responsibilities, as IDEA does not apply to colleges, trade schools, or universities. The Postsecondary Education Accommodations chart in Appendix A of this guide outlines some common questions about accommodations and Disability Services at Postsecondary Education Institutions.

## **Transportation/Travel Training**

Transportation provides access to opportunities such as employment, education, and recreation. Individuals with disabilities who do not drive or have a vehicle available to them will have to arrange transportation for work, community services and recreational activities. Transportation services vary across the state. The following links provide information about Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Taxi programs for individuals with disabilities:

- Maryland MTA reduced fare program:  
<https://mta.maryland.gov/disabled-reduced-fare-program>
- Maryland MTA Mobility/Paratransit Program:  
<https://mta.maryland.gov/mobility>
- Maryland Taxi Services:  
<http://mdod.maryland.gov/transport/Pages/Taxi-Services.aspx>
- Office of Disability Employment Policy Transportation Portal  
<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/Transportation.htm>

Individuals who are eligible to link with an adult service provider should ask what transportation options may be available. For more information about travel training, please see <http://mdod.maryland.gov/employment/Documents/job%20seeker%20documents/Travel%20Training.pdf>.

## **Travel Training**

Travel training is comprehensive, intensive instruction designed to teach students with disabilities how to safely and independently use public transportation. Students with disabilities must know what systems of transportation are available, how to access them, and how to plan their travel. Because travel training is taught in the natural environments in which the student plans to travel, they learn the skills and techniques necessary to negotiate public transportation in a safe and independent manner. Travel training results in increased independence, confidence, and ability to live, learn, work, and play within their communities.

## **Community Transportation Association**

1341 G St., NW  
Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005  
Voice: (202) 628.1480  
Fax: (202) 737.9197  
Website: [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org)

A national advocacy organization focusing on transportation for individuals who do not have access to mass transit or private automobiles.

## **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**

TCR-1, Room 7412  
Office of Civil Rights  
400 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
Voice: (202) 366-366-0153 or (888) 446-4511  
TTY/FIRS: (800) 877-8339  
Website: [www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov)

A good source for determining the rights of people with disabilities concerning public transportation, including the regulations concerning paratransit systems. Note: FTA has information on grants for assisting people with low incomes (including people with disabilities) with transportation. This information is available at: [www.fta.dot.gov/wtw/uoft.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/wtw/uoft.html). FTA also offers grant programs aimed at reducing transportation barriers by developing transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and low-income individuals to and from jobs and to develop transportation services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities. Emphasis is placed on projects that use mass transportation services.

## **Project Action**

Easter Seals Project Action  
1425 K Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005  
Voice: (800) 659-6428 or (202) 347-3066; Fax: (202) 347-3066  
Website: [www.projectaction.org](http://www.projectaction.org)  
Email: [projectaction@easterseals.com](mailto:projectaction@easterseals.com)

Project Action is a national program that fosters accessible transportation services for people with disabilities. It is administered by the National Easter Seal Society and funded by the Federal Transit Administration

## **United We Ride**

The Department of Transportation, with its partners at the departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education, launched United We Ride--a new five-part initiative--to break down the barriers between programs and set the stage for local partnerships that generate common-sense solutions and deliver A-plus performance for everyone who needs transportation. The website includes information on transportation-focused grant opportunities, state activities, resources, and strategies for coordinating transportation across agencies. A newsletter is also available.

Website: [www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/www/index.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/www/index.html)

## **U.S. Department of Transportation**

400 Seventh Street SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
Voice: (202) 366-4011; TTY: (202) 366-2979  
Fax: (202) 366-7951  
Website: [www.dot.gov/accessibility](http://www.dot.gov/accessibility)

A variety of information on regulations and resources concerning transportation for people with disabilities.

## Healthcare

Access to healthcare is an important consideration for students exiting the school system. As youth transition from high school to adult life it is important that they maintain a healthy lifestyle to achieve their postsecondary goals. This may include managing their healthcare and medications, communicating with healthcare professionals, and understanding healthcare insurance options. Individuals with disabilities may see pediatricians until they are 21 years of age, but at some point, it is crucial to transition from a pediatrician to a doctor who specializes in adults. The following links provide information about healthcare and the transition to adult healthcare for individuals with disabilities:

- Office of Genetics and People with Special Needs Resource Locator:  
<http://specialneeds.dhmh.maryland.gov/>
- National Center for Medical Home Implementation:  
<https://medicalhomeinfo.aap.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- Youth to Adult Health Care Transition:  
[https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/genetics/Pages/Health\\_Care\\_Transition.aspx](https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/genetics/Pages/Health_Care_Transition.aspx)
- Got Transition: <http://www.gottransition.org/>

## Community Access

### Recreation & Leisure

- **Maryland Learning Links** provides a comprehensive network of resources pertaining to recreation and leisure programs, as well as recreational activities throughout Maryland.  
<https://marylandlearninglinks.org/resource/recreation-organizations/>
- **Access for All- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR)** is working to ensure that the state's magnificent natural resources are accessible to all citizens and visitors. From conception and design to construction and implementation, time and attention have been spent on camping areas, cabins, fishing and boating docks, visitor centers, trails, and other outdoor recreation amenities to make it possible for people with disabilities to enjoy Maryland's great outdoors. The DNR is constantly working to expand accessibility to include people with disabilities.  
<http://dnr.maryland.gov/Publiclands/Pages/accessforall.aspx>

### Community Living Resources

- **Centers for Independent Living**-provide services to help empower persons with disabilities to lead self-directed, independent and productive lives in the community. Visit <http://www.msilc.org/map.html> for more information.
- **Service Access & Information Link (SAIL)** -web-based screening application tool that will allow Marylanders to apply, renew, or learn about other social services offered by the State of Maryland. Visit <https://mydhrbenefits.dhr.state.md.us/dashboardClient/#/home> for more information.

- [Social Security Administration Redbook](#)-a quick reference source about employment-related provisions for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit programs. Visit <https://www.ssa.gov/redbook/eng/main.htm> for more information.
- First Call for Help -Get a free and confidential referral to health and human services in Maryland by contacting at 410-685-0525 in the greater Baltimore area or (800) 492-0618 outside Baltimore.

### **In-Home Supports and Services**

- **The Community First Choice (CFC) Program** provides community services and supports to enable older adults and individuals with disabilities to live in their own homes. Some supports include: personal assistance services, personal emergency response systems, assistive technology, accessibility adaptations, consumer training and home delivered meals. Individuals must meet an institutional level of care and be financially eligible for community Medicaid. For more information, contact Medicaid's Long Term Care and Waiver Services at: 410- 767- 1739 or 1- 877- 463- 3464 or for MD Relay Service 1- 800- 735- 2258. Visit the Maryland Department of Health for more information.
- **The Maryland Personal Care (MAPC) Program** provides in- home personal care, supports planning and nurse monitoring services to individuals with disabilities or chronic medical conditions who qualify for Medicaid. Services may be provided in the workplace. This program is administered through the local health departments. For more information, contact your local health department or the Maryland Department of Health at: 410- 767- 1739 or 1- 877- 463- 3464 or for MD Relay Service 1- 800- 735- 2258.
- **The Community Pathways Waiver** is administered by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) under the Maryland Department of Health (DMH). The waiver offers a wide array of services to eligible individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability which is provided by licensed provider agencies or independent providers under self- directed services. There is a waiting list to receive services and funding availability is based on need. For more information or to apply for the waiting list, contact the [DDA headquarters](https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx) online at <https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/home.aspx> or by phone at 410- 767- 5600. To find contact information for DDA regional offices, visit <https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Regional%20Offices.aspx>.
- **The Low Intensity Support Services (LISS)** program is administered by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) under the Maryland Department of Health and grants eligible applicants up to \$2,000 for services supports by the person with a disability and their family. The DDA distributes LISS funding twice during the fiscal year in two rounds (July 1- 31 and January 1-31). LISS funding is distributed based on random selection and eligibility requirements. LISS provides funding for various individual support services and family support services to include: personal and attendant care, respite care, and other services to maximize independence, productivity, and integration within the community. There are currently four LISS agencies throughout the state responsible for processing applications. For more information, visit <https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/liss.aspx>

## **Housing Resources**

- [Maryland Housing Search Database](#) - Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's searchable database for affordable housing.
- [Maryland Affordable Apartment Search](#) - database maintained by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development of apartments that receive funding from HUD to offer subsidies to low-income tenants
- [GoSection8.com](#) – database of housing available to people receiving Section 8 vouchers

## **Rent Subsidy Programs**

- Maryland has a number of programs that help people who have a low-income pay for rental housing in their community. However, the waiting lists are long, so it is best to apply as soon as possible.
- MDOD helps administer two programs for people with disabilities who have low incomes:
  - [Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Affordable Rental Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Initiative](#)
  - [Section 811 Project Rental Assistance for People with Disabilities](#)

People with and without disabilities can also apply for public housing or rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program. Contact your county's [Public Housing Agency](#) to find out what assistance is available in your area. Note: For residents of the Eastern Shore, Garrett, Allegany, and Frederick Counties, contact the [Department of Housing and Community Development](#), which serves as your area's Public Housing Agency.

## **Guardianship and Alternatives**

Every individual who is 18 years of age and older has the right to make decisions concerning their lives. However, some individuals may require assistance in making those critical decisions.

Guardianship and durable power of attorney provide two possible alternatives to ensure that the affairs of an individual with a disability are handled appropriately. There are significant differences between the two options.

For more information please refer to the handbook, Guardianship and its Alternatives: <http://www.disabilityrightsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Guardianship-Handbook-2011.pdf>.

## **Financial Planning/Special Needs Trusts/Estate Planning**

**Financial planning** is the ability to understand how money works in the world: how someone manages to earn or make it, how that person manages it, how they can turn it into more and how that person donates it to help others. More specifically, it refers to the set of skills and knowledge that allows an individual to make informed and effective decisions about their finances. It is advisable to consult a financial planner familiar with the unique requirements for individuals with disabilities.

Financial planning for loved ones can be a daunting task for any family, especially those who have relatives with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are living longer and more fulfilling lives than ever before. For this reason, it is important for parents and/or guardians to prepare a financial plan for them once they are no longer able to handle their care. One financial tool used by many to arrange for such future care is a trust.

A trust is a legal arrangement where one party holds property for the financial benefit of another party. In other words, it can be thought of as a type of holding area, where a grantor, the party who creates the trust, will hold their assets before they distribute them to designated beneficiaries. Grantors of a trust can be a parent, grandparent, legal guardian or the court. Furthermore, there are many different types of trusts that can be used for varying family circumstances.

**Special Needs Trusts (SNTs)** are a complex type of trust, used by many families to provide financial stability for relatives with disabilities and special needs. These trusts are primarily aimed to preserve a relative's eligibility for government aid while allowing them to maintain a higher standard of living than might be possible with government aid alone.

As part of Futures Planning, which refers to envisioning a desired future for yourself, a family member, or a friend, and then identifying the types of services and supports that are needed, **estate planning** is one such aspect that refers to the process of planning how you want to transfer money or assets to other people during your lifetime or at your death. This process requires thoughtful preparation and supportive and knowledgeable people to assist in your plan and executing the right documents. There are guides that serve as valuable resources as family members consider option and begin the planning process. Visit the websites below to view examples of futures and estate planning guides and handbooks:

- [http://www.md-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/PlannGuide-v10\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.md-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/PlannGuide-v10_FINAL.pdf)
- <http://www.thearcofpgc.org/pdfs/Planning%20Now%20Guide.pdf>
- <http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/10/16/when-your-child-turns-18-a-guide-to-special-needs-guardianship/>
- <https://www.realeconomicimpact.org/public-policy/able-act.aspx>
- <http://www.md-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ABLE-Fact-Sheet-June-2015.pdf>  
<http://ablenrc.org/>
- <http://www.brainline.org/content/2009/09/financial-planning-for-special-needs-care-special-needs-trusts-snts.html>

## Conclusion

Planning for transition is an integral part of a student's journey from school to adulthood. Leaving a school environment that has been constant for more than 12 years and entering the unknown world of adulthood can be unsettling for students and their families. Carefully planning the transition to the adult world helps lessen these fears through teamwork with the student, school staff, family, and community.

It is never too early to begin planning what life will look like for students when they enter the adult world. This guide is meant to serve as a resource for families and professionals who are assisting students as they transition from high school to a career, postsecondary education, and community life. It is meant to be a starting point and planning tool to be used in conjunction with an IEP team to plan for and secure the necessary supports and services that will enable a smooth and seamless transition.

## Transition Process: Agency Linkage

Students with disabilities may require adult services to attain their postsecondary goals in employment, postsecondary education, training, and independent living (when appropriate). As a result, students and families need to make the right connections before leaving school so there are no gaps in service. With your permission, a school representative will assist with linking the student to the appropriate agencies. It is the responsibility of the student and family to complete the application process to ensure needed services are received if the student is determined eligible.

The Transition Planning Guide provides information on potential adult services. The guide contains information on agency eligibility criteria and specific linkage process. This information will assist you and your child as you begin the transition process and linkage to adult services.

The review of the Transition Planning Guide is the first step in the appropriate agency linkage process. The Guide provides information needed to select the correct agency for assistance. Your student's school staff can provide local contact information regarding the application process.

The receipt of the Transition Planning Guide serves as the initial linkage with adult services agencies. The distribution of this Guide is part of the transition planning process and your signature on this form will verify your receipt of the Guide.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Local School System: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A

### Transition Timeline

*For Students Exiting the School System at Age 21 and are Eligible for DDA Services*

#### Age 14/15 (or younger if appropriate)

- Begin identifying abilities, strengths, and challenges.
- Learn about disability and how it affects learning and other life activities.  
[https://www.youthhood.org/hangout/km\\_disability.asp](https://www.youthhood.org/hangout/km_disability.asp)
- Begin to self-advocate. Attend and participate in IEP meetings.  
[www.marylandlearninglinks.org](http://www.marylandlearninglinks.org).
- Begin participating in annual in transition assessments (i.e. career interest inventories, student interview).  
<http://nsttac.org/content/age-appropriate-transition-assessment-toolkit-3rd-edition>
- Begin identifying career interests and post-secondary goals.
- Learn how transition support is provided within school district. Identify transition personnel.
- Develop the initial transition plan at the annual IEP meeting. The transition plan is developed the IEP year the student turns 14 years of age and is updated annually.  
<http://www.mdtransition.org/>
- Apply to Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).  
<http://dda.dhmh.maryland.gov/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- If enrolled in high school, investigate Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS) through the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).
- Give written consent for school to share educational information with DDA or DORS if the student and family are interested in applying for services.
- Begin attending community transition fairs and workshops.
- Create a transition planning home file.
- Explore and participate in community based instruction opportunities offered through your school.

#### Age 16/17

- Explore and participate in employment training opportunities offered through your school district.
- Acquire the Maryland State Identification card from the Motor Vehicle Administration.  
<http://www.mva.maryland.gov/Driver-Services/apply/id-card.htm>
- Consider travel training. Utilize public transportation to travel in your community.  
<http://www.cmrtransit.org/travel-training/>
- Submit a Mobility Application Form for mobility/paratransit services  
<http://mta.maryland.gov/mobility>
- Consider obtaining a driver's license.  
<http://www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/apply.htm>  
<http://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/WTC/Documents/Driving.pdf>
- Create social networks. Make connections with friends for recreation and social events that can continue after exiting high school.

## Age 17/18

- Create a support network. Develop a list of people to go to for help.
- Create healthcare connections. Develop a plan to change from pediatric to an adult health care system.
- Consider consulting an attorney about future needs planning.
- Investigate the need for power of attorney or guardianship. Suggested handbook: Guardianship and Its Alternatives. <http://www.aging.maryland.gov/egov/Documents/GuardianshipHandbookRev2011.pdf>
- Contact DDA Regional Office to verify eligibility status and priority category.
- The contact information for DDA Regional Offices can be found at:  
<https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/coordination%20of%20community%20services.aspx>
- Explore and choose a Coordination of Community Services Provider. To find current Coordination of Community Services Providers in your region visit  
<http://dda.dhmf.maryland.gov/SitePages/rescoordination.aspx>
- Explore assistive technology (if appropriate) options upon exiting the school system

## Age 18

- Explore supported employment and work-based learning opportunities offered through your school district.
- Attend community transition fairs and workshops. Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).  
<http://ssa.gov>
- Apply for Medical Assistance.  
<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?p=96>
- Consider benefits counseling and planning,  
<http://www.mdod.maryland.gov/Jobseekers.aspx?id=2108>
- Begin financial and future planning.
- If not yet completed, choose a Coordination of Community Service (CCS) Provider.
- Meet with your Coordinator of Community Service (CCS) to develop a plan for the future.
- Register for Selective Service (if male).  
<http://www.sss.gov>
- Register to vote.
- Explore living arrangement options. (Independent, roommate, group living etc.)
- Explore subsidized housing in your community. <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/maryland>

### **Age 19-20 (year prior to exit)**

- Contact Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) for eligibility status if not yet determined.
- Apply to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) the fall prior to exit year.  
<http://dors.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx> Consider a Career Assessment through the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).
- Begin visiting community adult service providers.  
<http://dda.dhmh.maryland.gov/SitePages/services.aspx>
- Visit [Self-Directed Services](#) if interested in learning about self-directing services.  
<https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/sdforms.aspx>
- If choosing Self-Directed Services, choose a support broker and fiscal management service.
- Explore post-secondary education and training options.
- Explore adult mental health care if needed.

### **Age 20/21 (October/November of final year)**

- Apply to several providers that best meet your needs.
- Finalize the selection of an adult provider.
- Invite adult provider to exit IEP meeting.
- Work with your coordinator of resource services and adult provider to develop a service funding plan to be submitted to Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).
- If selecting Self-Directed Services, begin to write a self-directed plan with your support broker.
- Develop a contingency plan in the event that funding from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is not immediately available.
- Explore transportation options (how to get to work and around community, etc.)

### **Age 20/21 (spring of final year)**

- Work with school transition personnel, adult provider and Coordinator of Community Resources to create a seamless transition from the school system into the adult service delivery system.

## **Transition Timeline**

*For Students Graduating at Age 18*

### **Age 13/14 (last year of middle school)**

- Begin identifying abilities, strengths, and challenges.
- Learn about disability and how it affects learning and other life activities.  
[https://www.youthhood.org/hangout/km\\_disability.asp](https://www.youthhood.org/hangout/km_disability.asp)
- Practice self-advocacy skills. Attend and participate in IEP meetings.  
[www.marylandlearninglinks.org](http://www.marylandlearninglinks.org).
- Begin participating in annual transition assessments (i.e. career interest inventories, student interview).  
<http://nsttac.org/content/age-appropriate-transition-assessment-toolkit-3rd-edition>
- Begin identifying career interests and post-secondary goals.
- Learn how transition support is provided within school district. Identify transition personnel.
- Develop the initial transition plan at the annual IEP meeting. The transition plan is developed the IEP year the student turns 14 years of age and is updated annually.  
<http://www.mdtransition.org/>
- Consider a 5-year plan to earn diploma.
- Apply to Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) if appropriate.  
<http://dda.dhmh.maryland.gov/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- If enrolled in high school, investigate Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS) through the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).
- Give permission for school to share educational information with DDA and/or DORS.
- Create a transition planning home file.

## **Transition Timeline**

*For Students Graduating at Age 18*

### **Freshman Year (Grade 9)**

- Meet with guidance counselor to select a high school course of study (complete program).  
<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/F8A34712-B21E-4DC2-A186-9144565375F2/34007/CTEBlueBook2012Web.pdf>
- Become familiar with needed classroom accommodations.
- Create social and support networks.
- Review graduation requirements with guidance counselor.

### **Sophomore Year (Grade 10)**

Research career interests. Visit businesses. Arrange job shadowing.

- Acquire the Maryland State Identification card from the Motor Vehicle Administration.  
<http://www.mva.maryland.gov/Driver-Services/apply/id-card.htm>
- Meet with the school team to apply for College Board Accommodations.  
<https://www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities/request-accommodations>
- Take the PSAT.
- Review graduation requirements with guidance counselor.
- Explore transportation options. Consider travel training. Utilize public transportation to travel in your community.
- Submit a Mobility Application Form for mobility/paratransit services  
<http://mta.maryland.gov/mobility>
- Consider obtaining a driver's license.  
<http://www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/apply.htm>  
<http://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/WTC/Documents/Driving.pdf>

## **Transition Timeline**

*For Students Graduating at Age 18*

### **Junior Year (Grade 11)**

- Apply to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) the fall prior to exit year for vocational rehabilitation services.  
<http://dors.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
- Consider a Career Assessment through the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).
- Meet with the school team to apply for College Board Accommodations.  
<https://www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities/request-accommodations>
- Take the PSAT.
- Consider obtaining a driver's license.  
<http://www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/apply.htm>  
<http://dors.maryland.gov/consumers/WTC/RTS/Pages/driving.aspx>
- Consider part-time/summer employment.
- Research colleges, trade schools, training programs, military and employment opportunities. Discuss with guidance counselor and/or transition personnel.
- Refine post-secondary goals.
- Visit colleges, trade schools and/or post-secondary training programs.
- If exploring military options, meet with military recruiter and take the ASVAB.  
<http://official-asvab.com/>  
<http://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab>
- If entering employment upon graduation, research job opportunities. Network with family and friends about job openings in their companies.
- Explore the differences between community college and 4-year university programs.
- Consider part-time vs full-time enrollment options for post-secondary programs.
- Begin to research federal and state financial aid and scholarships for post-secondary programs.
- Explore/participate in high school to college transition programs.
- Review graduation requirements with guidance counselor.

## Transition Timeline

*For Students Graduating at Age 18*

### Senior Year (Grade 12)

- Prepare to take the SAT and/or the ACT  
<http://sat.collegeboard.org/home?affiliateId=nav&bannerId=g-cbh-sat>  
<http://www.actstudent.org/>  
<https://www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities/request-accommodations>
- If enrolling in community college, prepare to take the Accuplacer. If categorized as a remedial (not “college-ready”) student, access academic services for pre-college instruction.  
<http://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students>
- Apply to colleges or post-secondary programs or enlist in the military.
- If applying to postsecondary schools, contact the Disability Support Center.
- If entering employment, begin submitting applications.
- Apply for scholarships and grants.
- Meet with DORS counselor to discuss funding for post-secondary programs or employment opportunities.
- Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at age 18 if eligible.  
<http://ssa.gov>
- Individuals receiving SSI and SSDI are eligible to apply for the community college tuition waiver.  
[http://www.mhec.state.md.us/financialaid/ProgramDescriptions/prog\\_disabilities.asp](http://www.mhec.state.md.us/financialaid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_disabilities.asp)
- Apply for federal and state financial aid between January 1<sup>st</sup> – March 1<sup>st</sup>.  
<https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- Explore adult mental health care if needed.
- Explore assistive technology (if appropriate) options upon exiting the school system.
- Apply for Medical Assistance if eligible.  
<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?p=96>
- Register for Selective Service (if male) at age 18.  
<http://www.sss.gov>
- Register to vote at age 18.
- Change pediatric healthcare to an adult health care system.
- Upon acceptance into college, access Disability Support Services.

## Appendix B

### POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION ACCOMMODATIONS FAQs

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The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires that a student with disabilities have an IEP. However, IDEA does not apply to colleges, trade schools, or universities. These schools are governed by a set of other federal laws including the Americans with disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act.

#### ***“WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES IN ACCESSING ACCOMMODATIONS AT POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS?”***

##### ***Will I continue to have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?***

No. There are no IEP’s in a college setting. The responsibilities of colleges, trade schools, and universities are significantly different from those of the high schools. Another significant difference is that postsecondary schools will only work with the young adult and not with the parent. The young adult will have much greater responsibilities as a college student. These laws make it the young adult’s responsibility to request services and to provide appropriate documentation of the disability. The young adult must initiate the process be actively involved in requesting appropriate accommodations.

##### ***Will I get the same accommodations as I received in high school?***

Not necessarily. The IEP does not carry over to the postsecondary school. The postsecondary school will determine what accommodations the student will receive after the information has been gathered and the documentation has been reviewed.

#### **ACCESSING DISABILITY SERVICES AT POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS**

##### ***Where do I go for services?***

Every postsecondary school has individuals who assist students with disabilities. These individuals are in the Disability Support Services Office (DSS). To receive academic accommodations and/or other services, the young adult must first **self-identify** to the DSS office. It is the young adult’s **responsibility** to talk to the postsecondary school about the needed supports.

##### ***When should I request services?***

Although the young adult may request accommodations from postsecondary schools at any time, it is recommended that he/she make an appointment with the DSS office as soon as possible and no later than **one month** before the start of the semester. Arranging services and accommodations takes time. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. Accommodations are never made retroactively. Never wait until academic difficulties arise.

## ACCESSING DISABILITY SERVICES AT POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS

### *What Documentation do I need to provide?*

Schools set reasonable standards for documentation. Some schools may require more documentation than others, but all schools will require the young adult to provide documentation prepared by an appropriate qualified professional. The young adult will be **responsible for any fees** associated with obtaining required documentation. Essential elements of the documentation include:

- A diagnostic statement identifying the disability.
- A description of:
  - the diagnostic methodology used.
  - the current functional limitations as they relate to both academic and residential settings.
  - the expected progression or stability of the disability.
  - current and past accommodations, services and/or medications.
- Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services.

## RECEIVING ACCOMMODATIONS AT POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLS

### *What accommodations are provided?*

Accommodations are modifications to the academic requirements that are necessary to ensure equal access to qualified young adults with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may include:

- Extended time on tests
- Books in alternate format
- Sign language interpreters
- Screen readers
- Voice recognition
- Other assistive technology

The DSS office will work with the young adult to set up the reasonable accommodations. An accommodation **cannot be provided** if it creates a fundamental alteration of the coursework. Waiving of required coursework is not permitted. Students with disabilities are **required** to meet the requirements of the program of study in order to graduate.

## Appendix C

### *Specific Populations*

There are other transition-related supports and services that specific populations of persons with disabilities may need as they access employment, postsecondary education, and community activities. A few of them are discussed below. For information about specific populations (e.g. Autism, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Low Vision) visit the Maryland Transition Website: [www.mdtransition.org](http://www.mdtransition.org)

\*For information about family specific supports, contact the Parent Resource Center in your local school system.

#### **Autism**

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ASD is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a “spectrum condition” that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. These characteristics are generally evident before age three and adversely affect educational performance. Children with the disorder range from very high-functioning (nearly indistinguishable from children who do not have autism) to profoundly impaired. Some of the behaviors associated with autism include delayed learning of language; difficulty making eye contact or holding a conversation; difficulty with executive functioning, which relates to reasoning and planning; narrow, intense interests; poor motor skills’ and sensory sensitivities. Again, a person on the spectrum might follow many of these behaviors or just a few, or many others besides. The diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is applied based on analysis of all behaviors and their severity.
- For more information and to learn about available resources visit:  
<http://www.autismconnectmd.org/>  
<http://www.pathfindersforautism.org/>  
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/resource-guide/state/MD>

#### **Deaf/Hard of Hearing**

- Deaf
  - The official definition of deafness from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is “a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.” The phrase “with or without amplification” is significant as it indicates that a hearing aid will not provide sufficient accommodation so that the student can succeed in the classroom.
- Hard of Hearing
  - Students identified as hard of hearing have some degree of hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. Those who are hard of hearing may benefit from the use of hearing aids or other assistive listening devices. They depend primarily upon spoken English in communicating with others.
- For more information and to learn about available resources visit:  
[www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org)  
<http://pepnet.org/>

## **Blind/Low Vision**

- According to IDEA, a visual impairment is vision that even with correction adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness. Partial sight can refer to low vision (cannot read at a normal reading distance even with corrective lenses). Blindness can refer to either being legally blind (less than 20/200 vision in the better eye), a limited field of vision, or total blindness (no sight).
- Students with visual impairments need to learn the same subjects and academic skills as their sighted peers, although they will probably do so in adapted ways. They must also learn an expanded set of skills that are distinctly *vision*-related.
- For more information and to learn about available resources visit:
  - Division of Rehabilitation Services  
[Guide to Rehabilitation Services and Resources for Individuals who are Blind or Severely Visually Impaired-](#)  
Website-[http://dors.maryland.gov/Brochures/blind\\_guide.pdf](http://dors.maryland.gov/Brochures/blind_guide.pdf)
  - The Maryland School for the Blind  
3501 Taylor Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21236  
Local Telephone: (401) 444-5000  
Website <https://www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org/>
  - American Association of the Deaf-Blind  
8630 Fenton Street, Suite 121  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3803  
Local Telephone: (301) 495-4403  
TDD/TTY Telephone: (304) 495-4402  
Email: [AADB-Info@aadb.org](mailto:AADB-Info@aadb.org)  
Website <http://www.aadb.org/>
  - Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind  
8720 Georgia Avenue Suite 210  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-589-0894  
Website <http://www.clb.org/>
  - National Federation of the Blind  
200 East Wells Street  
at Jernigan Place  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
Phone: 410-659-9314  
Fax: 410-685-5653  
Website <https://nfb.org/>

## Appendix D

# Glossary of Term and Acronyms

**ADA** - Americans with Disabilities Act- The civil rights act for persons with disabilities.

**ASD**- Autism Spectrum Disorders

**ASVAB**- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery

**AT** - Assistive Technology--Low- or high-tech devices (like switches or computer software) to help people communicate or complete work tasks.

**BHA**- Behavioral Health Administration

**CCS**- Coordinator of Community Services

**CIL**- Centers for Independent Living

**Community-based**- Services provided in the community where people with and without disabilities work, live, and spend their free time, versus a segregated setting where all of the individuals in a particular setting have a disability.

**Competitive Employment**- Employment found in vocational settings within the community that require no additional support

**CRP**- Community Rehabilitation Partner (Vendors from the adult systems that may provide services and supports to individuals with disabilities after they exit school, if determined eligible.)

**DDA**- Developmental Disabilities Administration

**DORS**- Division of Rehabilitation Services

**DLLR**- Department of Labor, License, and Regulation

**DSS**- Department of Social Services

**Eligible**- Must qualify for services by meeting specific requirements

**Entitlement**- Services are guaranteed

**Guardianship**- A court proceeding that grants decision-making authority for an adult with a significant

cognitive disability to a third party (e.g., parent is granted decision-making power over their child's finances.)

**IDEA-** Individuals With Disabilities Education Act - Federal regulations that govern special education

**IEP-** Individual Education Plan

**Interest Inventories-** Verbal, written or computer exercises that help a person identify what jobs might be a good fit for them based on things they like to do and activities they like to participate in.

**IPE-** Individualized Plan for Employment

**MA-** Medical Assistance

**MTA-** Maryland Transit Administration

**Pre-ETS-** Pre- Employment Transition Services under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

**Self-Advocacy-** The process of obtaining needed services for oneself.

**Self-Determination-** A process in which the individual's preferences, interest, abilities, and wishes are the focus of planning and implementing activities.

**SGA-** Substantial Gainful Activity

**SSA-** Social Security Administration

**SSDI-** Social Security Disability Insurance

**SSI-** Supplemental Security Income

**VR-** Vocational Rehabilitation

**WIOA-** Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act



Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

