



# Life After High School

A Guide for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse  
Families of Youth with Disabilities

Open Doors for Multicultural Families  
[www.multiculturalfamilies.org](http://www.multiculturalfamilies.org)





### **Mission**

The mission of Open Doors for Multicultural Families is to ensure that diverse families of loved ones with developmental disabilities and special health care needs have equitable access to culturally and linguistically appropriate information, resources, and services.

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## Acknowledgements

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Open Doors for Multicultural Families developed this guide in collaboration with the Center for Change in Transition Services. Individuals may reproduce any part of this document. Please credit the source and support of federal funds. Information on the project can be found at:

<http://multiculturalfamilies.org/wordpress/youth-transition-program/>.

This guide was created using the LifeCourse Framework, developed by UMKC Institute for Human Development, UCEDD, and made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License. More tools and materials at [lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com).

## Important Contributors from the Community

We extend special thanks for the culturally and linguistically diverse parents and self-advocates for sharing their experiences and advices.

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## Before getting started: Tools to Consider

As youth move into adulthood, preparing ahead becomes important. It helps to think about the future life youth and family want. Finding the right supports helps youth and families move toward long term life goals.

## Charting the Life Course:



The above framework helps individuals of all abilities and ages and their families to:

- develop a vision for a good life.
- think about what they need to know and do.
- identify how to find or develop supports.
- discover what it takes to live the life they want.

Charting Life Course is a framework of the Family to Family Life Course Network | UMKC IHD, UCEDD. More materials at [lifecoursetools.com](http://lifecoursetools.com)



## How can this guide help?

When we add culture and language differences to the transition process, preparing for adult life becomes a very complicated puzzle. With this guide, we hope families and youth will be able to:

- communicate individual and family needs.
- work with the transition team.
- complete applications for services before a youth leaves school.
- make connections with people who support you and important resources for life after school.

## How is the guide organized?



Introduction: What is Transition?



Section 1: Personal discovery and Self-Advocacy



Section 2: School Transition



Section 3: Daily Life Options



Section 4: Safety and Security



Section 5: Community Living



Appendix: Resources

# Introduction

## Who should read this transition guide?

If you are a youth between the ages of 16 and 21 with a disability, we wrote this guidebook for you and your family. During **transition**, the period of time when you move from high school to adult life, it will be important for youth and their families to take an active role in **transition planning**.

This guide is especially important for families who need extra help and time to understand the transition process and to find out what resources are available.



## Why do we need a Transition Guide?



### Culture Matters

Families come from different cultures. Family beliefs and values might be different from those of professionals. This guide helps youth and families recognize differences and make informed decisions about what is best for them.

### Planning Matters

We don't know the future, but we can prepare for it. Some families need help to prepare for the future. Knowing where to get information about transition resources helps the family and youth to get the services they need.



### Time Matters

Transition also involves applying to services. Adults with disabilities need to qualify for services in order to receive them. It is also important to start planning early as some youth might need extra time to learn skills they need as an adult.



## Transition: What is it? What does it mean for you?

During high school, the word **transition** appears again and again.

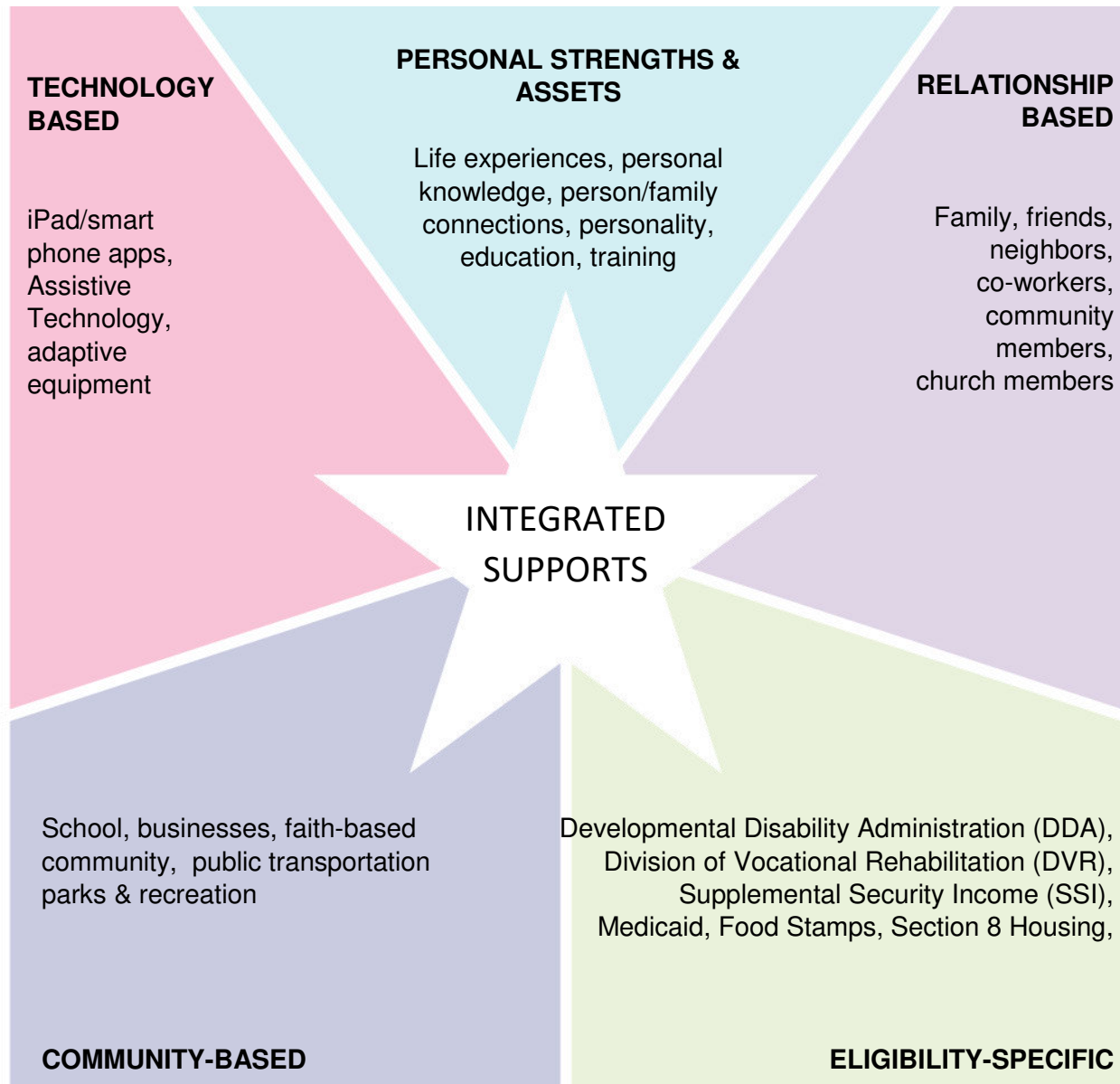
**Transition** is an important period of time for youth between 16 and 21 years old. Like most people your age, you probably go to high school and live at home with your family. Many coordinated supports between family, professionals and school help with daily life. However, when you graduate from school, some parts of your life will change. You will not go to high school anymore. How will you spend your day? Maybe you will live in your own apartment. Maybe you will go to college or get a job. There will be many changes, and preparing for those changes is called **transition**.



Every person needs support in life. However, knowing where to find support and whom to ask can be challenging for some people. Do you know how to talk about your needs? Do you know which people to ask for support when you need it? Do you know how to plan for the support you need? All of these questions are part of **transition**.

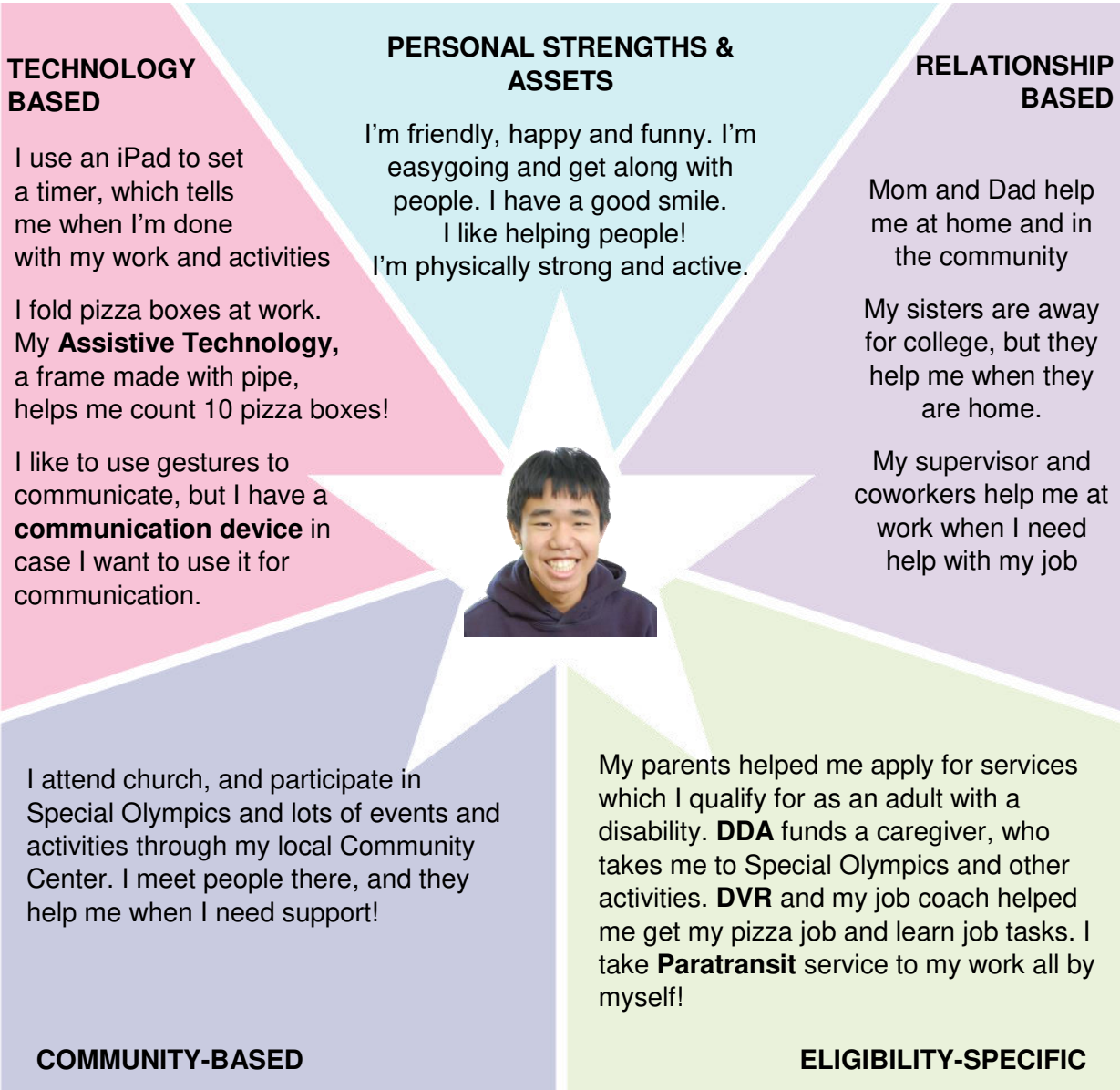
## Integrated Support and Services

Throughout this manual, we will use the model below to help youth and families explore and organize different types of support. Everyone needs support in life, and using different types of supports and services helps us move toward the life we want. The tool below can help you and your family think about how to find and coordinate the right supports for your future. Types of support may include:

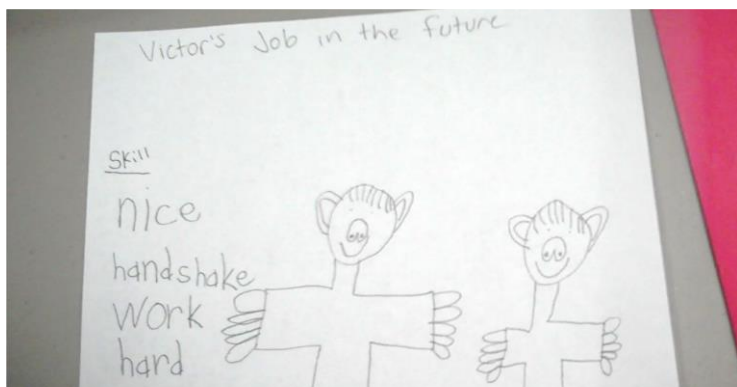


Access the LifeCourse framework and tools at [www.lifecoursetools.com/](http://www.lifecoursetools.com/)

## Meet Mickle and his Integrated Support System



## Youth, Personal Discovery, and Transition



## Section 1: Self-Discovery & Self-Determination



What kind of support do we need in life? In this section, we ask important questions about what you want for your life and how to plan for your future.

### This section will cover:

1. Discovery: Who Am I? - Person Centered Transition Planning
2. Discovery: What Do I Want for the Future?
3. Discovery: How Can I Get the Support I Want for the Future?
4. Advice: Family and Friends Share Their Experiences
5. Advice: Professional Opinion
6. Resources

### For Youth:

- Explore your interests, preference, strengths and support needs
- Practice making decisions and accept responsibility for your own decisions
- Communicate what you want and need to the people who support you
- Practice **disability disclosure**—when, what, and with whom to share information about your disability
- Practice requesting accommodation

### For Family & Caregivers:

- Support youth in discovering their interests, strengths, and vision for future
- Believe in youth's capacity to make their own decisions and support their decisions
- Know youth's support needs and help them practice disability disclosure and requesting accommodation
- Encourage youth to have new experiences that help lead them toward their future life goals



## Discovery: Who Am I?



### What is Person-Centered Planning?

**Person-Centered Planning (PCP)** is a planning process driven by a focus on the whole person (youth) with support from people who know him/her well. PCP offers a way to discover **who** the person is, **what** they want in life, and **how** to support the person.



### Why is PCP important?

Family, friends, and teachers have offered support for youth at home, school, or in the community. However, when a young person becomes an adult, support from school and teachers will end. Young people will need to understand themselves and express their needs, with or without family's support. To learn more about **PCP** and how to get support with the planning process, check the resources page.



## Meet Mickie and His Family



Mickie is 21 and graduating this year from his **transition program** with a job. He is a happy young adult and loves to observe people. Because of his autism, he has many support needs, particularly with communication. He communicates mostly through body language because he does not like assistive technologies.



When he was transitioning from elementary to middle school, he and his family started to do **PCP**. It helped them learn more about who Mickie is, what his strengths are, and what he loves to do. They identified the supports he needs and the family's goals and dreams for Mickie. Because they started PCP early, Mickie and his family were prepared for changes that come with transition. More information about resources for PCP is available in the resources page (p.16)

## Discovery: What Do I Want for the Future?

Some youth might know what they want for their life—getting a job, going to college, or having life-long hobbies. Some youth and their families might not know what they want in the future.

However, it is important to discover what youth and family **want** and **don't want** for life after high school. Successful transition requires step-by-step planning. Families and youth will have better results if they develop plans for what youth need to learn and which experiences and resources will assist them prepare for adult life.

## Family Advice: Why is early planning important?



*"For us, work is a very important part of our life. Mickle loves to be around people, so he will have a much better life if he has activities or a job that lets him be around people. In our transition planning, we thought about things he needs to be able to do independently. He needs to have behavior that people will accept. He has to be able to understand basic instructions.*

*These are things we thought about. It's a lot for Mickle to learn, so we started early and figured out what support works for him."*

## Mickle and His Family's Vision for the Future

### What I DON'T want:

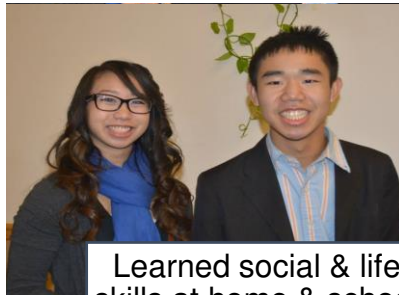
- Treated with disrespect
- People making decisions *for* me
- Be alone & isolated
- Stay home all day

### My Vision for a GOOD life:

- Be around people I love
- Be respected & be happy
- Get a job
- Enjoy hobbies



## Experiences that supported Mickle during Transition



Learned social & life skills at home & school



Volunteered with dad & church members



Participated in Special Olympics



Found hobbies out in the community

## How Our Family Supported Mickle during Transition



*"We see many parents are afraid to let their child with disabilities try new experiences. But if we always tell them "no," they get afraid to try anything or believe in themselves. We have let Mickle try new experiences since he was young. He made mistakes along the way, but we never made a big deal out of it.*

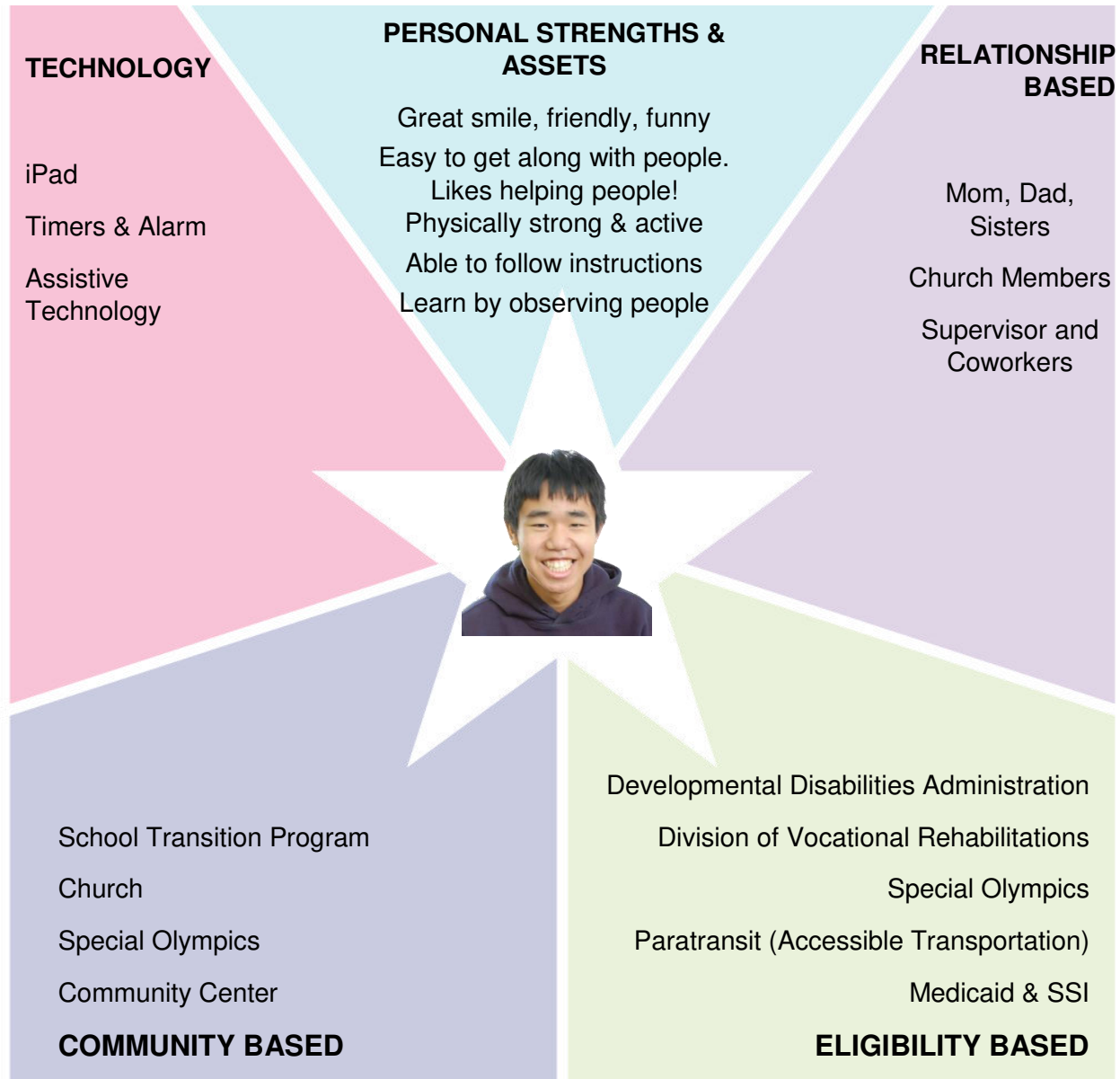
*Because we know it takes time for Mickle to get used to new experiences, we don't expect him to be perfect. It's worth counting his successes over things he cannot do."*



## Discovery: How Can I Get the Support I Need?

All people use a combination of support to lead a life they enjoy. Accessing different types of supports and resources helps youth maximize their possibilities. To get started, learn about different types of support.

### Mickle's Integrated Support System



The ***Life Trajectory Worksheet*** is a helpful tool to brainstorm your ideas about the future. It can also help you communicate with people who support you in the transition process. [www.lifecoursetools.com/planning/](http://www.lifecoursetools.com/planning/)

## What is Disability Disclosure?

When individuals with a disability become adults, there will be situations where they need to explain the disability. **Disability Disclosure** means that a person shares information about the disability to achieve a specific purpose. However, **Disability Disclosure** is a choice. An individual with a disability does not have to share personal information unless the disclosure is necessary.



*Sometimes you need to talk about your disability to ask for support you need. Disability is not something bad or shameful. It's part of who I am. I have a choice about when and who to talk to about my disability—like at college or work. I recommend that people know how to disclose their disability because they might need an **accommodation**.*

*Without that support, it might be hard to be successful with your job or education.*

**Accommodation** is any arrangement an individual with a disability requires to achieve equal opportunity at school, work or in the community.

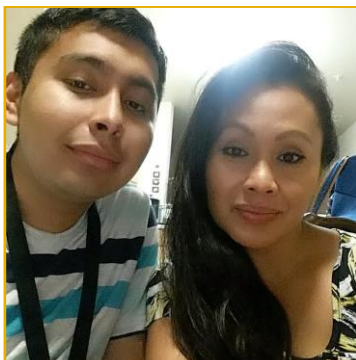
To learn more about **Disability Disclosure** and **accommodation**, please see the resources page (p.16).

## Why is Disability Disclosure Important?

While youth with disabilities attend school, their families, teachers, and professionals understand their needs and arrange accommodations. However, when a youth leaves school and becomes an adult, accommodations are not automatic. Support will not be provided until he or she requests accommodation. It is very important to understand how to ask for accommodations.

Special Education teachers and Independent Living Centers can help youth and families understand **Disability Disclosure**. They can also help youth and families practice sharing personal information about a disability and requesting accommodations. More information about Independent Living Centers is available online and in the resources page (p.16).

## Advice: Families and friends talk about disclosure and self-advocacy



*Families should set high expectations and not think someone can't do something just because of a disability. Yes, it will be hard sometimes, but support and encouragement helps youth try new experiences. My son has a disability, but I know he is capable of learning many things. Time and support will help him learn what he needs.*

*It's important to learn how and when to talk about your disability. I learned how to make decisions by myself and with support from family, teachers, and other people in my life. I discovered my strengths, likes and dislikes. I tried different activities, like volunteering in the community. I discovered more about myself and learned how to be responsible for my decisions. Everyone can learn from mistakes.*



*If you depend on your parents talking for you, people don't know what you like, and what you don't like. It's important for you to speak up! Speak up, tell your family and teachers what you want to do. If you don't speak up, they cannot help you and you might end up doing things you don't like.*

## How can families help?

Family can help youth by learning about **Disability Disclosure**, when and why it's important to share information about his or her disabilities. To learn more or to get help, please see the resources page at the end of this section (p.16).



## Resources

### Person Centered Planning (PCP)

Individual & Relationship-based support: Ready to make your personal profile with family and friends?

- My Life Plan: <http://www.mylifeplan.guide/>
- Life Trajectory Worksheet and one page profile:  
<http://www.lifecoursetools.com/planning/>

Where to get information about personal assistance on PCP?

Community Based Supports & Resources:

- Informing Families: <http://informingfamilies.org/person-centered-planning/>
- Washington PAVE: <http://wapave.org/programs/person-centered-planning/>
- Open Doors for Multicultural Families: <http://multiculturalfamilies.org>
- Independent Living Center: Find your local chapter at <http://www.wasilc.org/> under the “IL center” tab
- The Arc: Find local chapter at [http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local arc chapters](http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local_arc_chapters)

Eligibility-based Supports & Resources:

- If you are client of **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)** or **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)**, contact your case manager.

### Self-Advocacy & Disability Disclosure

Community-Based Supports & Resources:

- Independent Living Center: Find your local chapter at <http://www.wasilc.org/> under the “IL center” tab
- The Arc: Find local chapter at [http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local arc chapters](http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local_arc_chapters)

Online Resources:

- 411 disclosure: <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/disability-disclosure>
- Parent Center Hub: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/disability-disclosure-video/>

**For additional questions on this resource guide, or if you need help from a person who speaks the same language, please contact:**

Open Doors for Multicultural Families

253-216-4479

[www.multiculturalfamilies.org](http://www.multiculturalfamilies.org)



To access electronic version, visit <http://multiculturalfamilies.org/wordpress/transition-guide/>



## Life After High School

### Section 2: School-Based Transition



**ENGLISH**

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## Acknowledgements

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## Section 2: School-Based Transition



What does everyday life look like after we finish school? As we get older, our daily activities change. In this section, we ask important questions about daily life.

**This section will cover:**

### **School Transition**

1. What are **Parent and Student Rights** related to Secondary Transition Services?
2. What are **Transition Services**?
3. What is a **Transition Program**?
4. What do I do when I have problem at school or with my **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**?

#### **For Youth:**

- Talk to your teachers or school counselors to explore future plans.
- Participate in your IEP meetings and share your interests and wants for the future.
- Try new experiences and opportunities to find out what types of work and work environments you like and your employment related strengths.
- Identify accommodations that will help you to succeed as an adult.

#### **For Family & Caregivers:**

- Understand **Parent and Student Rights** related to transition services.
- Learn about the school-based transition process.
- Participate in transition planning meetings.
- Learn about and access available supports and resources to maximize youth options for the future.
- Support youth who make decisions that reflect their interests and strengths.

## What are Parent and Student Rights (Procedural Safeguards)?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires public schools to provide students and families with information about their rights related to special education. These are outlined in a document called **Notice of Special Education Procedural Safeguards for Students and their Families**. School districts must provide parents with a copy of this document when:<sup>i</sup>

1. a student is first referred for a special education evaluation;
2. a school receives the first state complaint and/or the first due process complaint in a school year;
3. a decision is made to remove a student for more than ten school days in a year; or
4. a parent requests the information.

## Why are School-Based Transition Services Important?

1. All students with an IEP have a right to transition services beginning the year they turn **sixteen years old**.
2. When transition services become part of a student's IEP at age 16, the focus of all services prepare the student for life after high school, especially related to:
  - a. further education or training;
  - b. employment; and
  - c. for students who need it, independent living.
3. This preparation is important, as once a student becomes an adult and leaves the public school system, all disability-related services and supports become **eligibility-based**. This means adults with disabilities have to apply and qualify for services.
4. NOT all adults with disabilities qualify for services.
5. Accessing transition services through school is one of the best ways to prepare for life after high school.

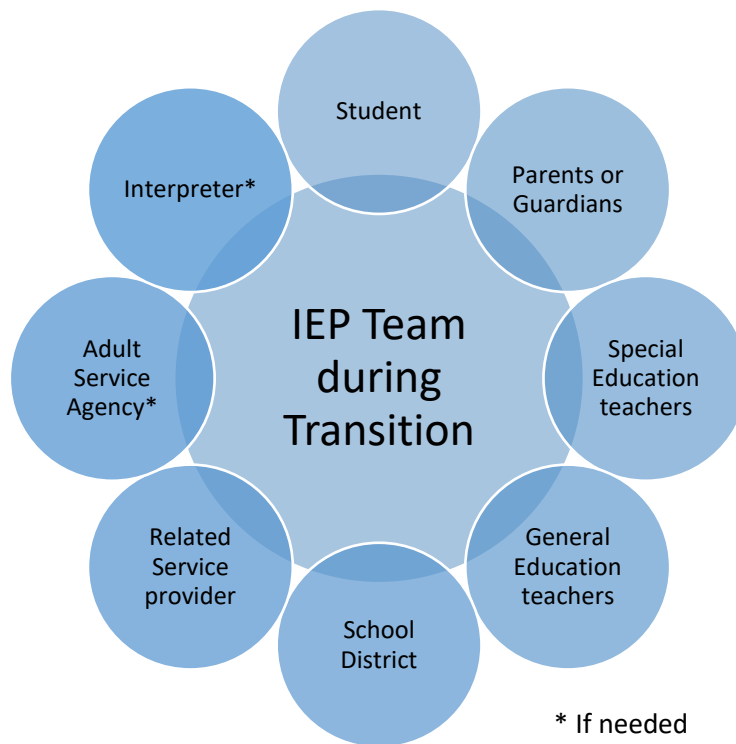
- Talk to teachers and school /career counselors, participate in extracurricular activities, and more.
- Connect to adult services and resources that help youth succeed with their daily life, college, and work.
- Learn about the types of supports that work for youth.
- Practicing requesting services and supports in daily life.





## What is an IEP Team during Transition?

A student who is eligible for special education services has an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** and an **IEP Team**. An **IEP Team** must include the student and his/her parent or guardian. An IEP team during transition may also include adult service providers.



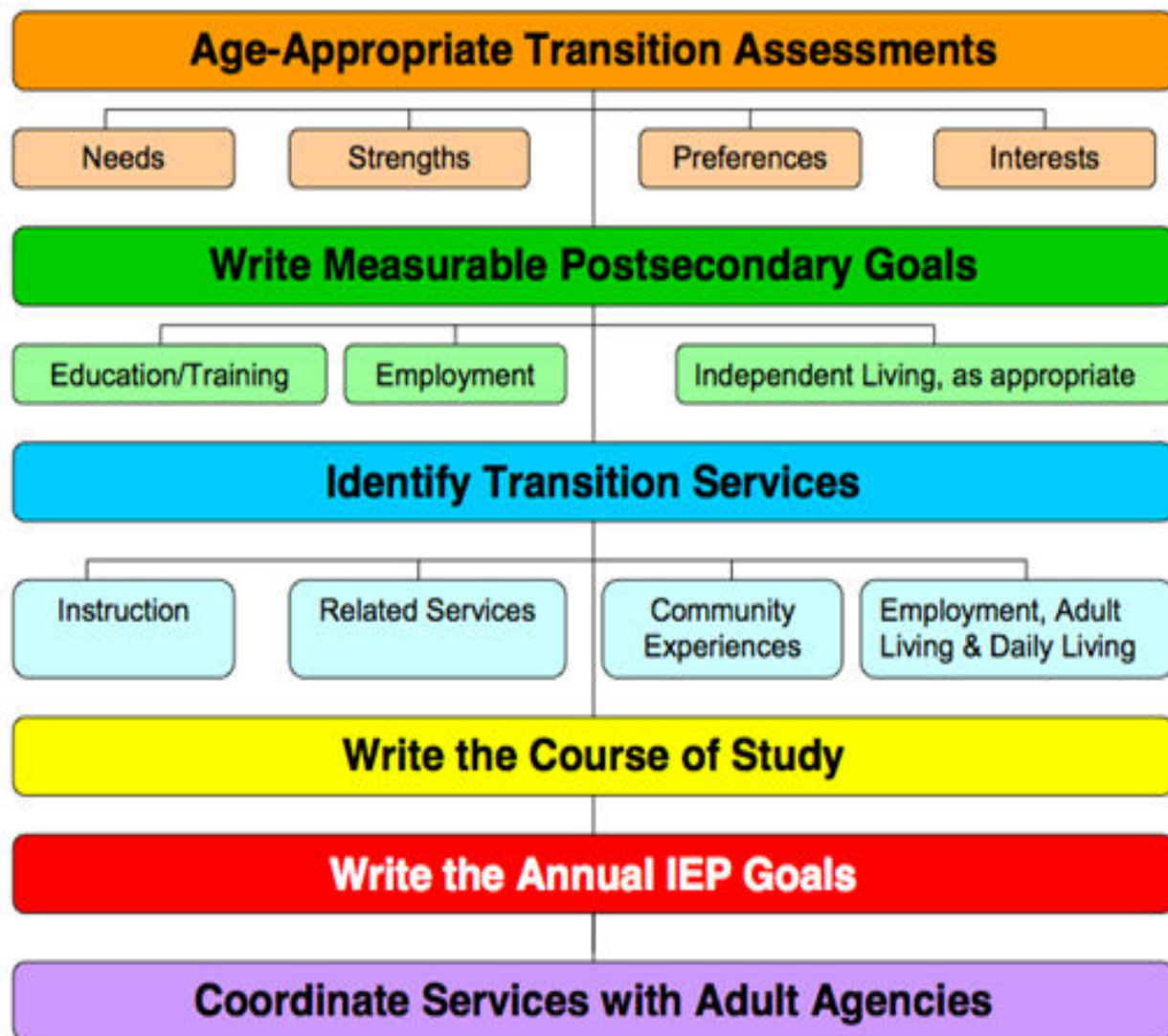
## When Does Transition Start?

Under the law, the **IEP Team** needs to start **transition services** by the time a student turns age 16.

Students who receive Special Education services are entitled to receive public school services **free of charge until one of the following occurs:**

- the student is determined no longer in need of special education based on a reevaluation by the school district;
- the student graduates from high school;
- the student turns twenty-one years old; or,
- the student or parent revokes consent in writing for continuing to receive special education and related services.

## What does the Transition Process look like?



(Source: Center for Change in Transition Services)

The next part of this guide will go into more detail about each of these steps in the transition process. It is important to remember that these steps are in order, and it is not recommended to skip any of the steps.



## Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment

Good transition plans start with **Age-Appropriate Assessment** to identify the youth's **interests, strengths, preferences, and support needs**. Assessments can be informal (surveys, interviews, etc.) or formal. A combination of informal and formal assessment is typically appropriate for most students.



- I want to become a nurse's assistant.
- I'm good at working with children!
- I prefer to work inside.
- I need support to remember my tasks!

An assessment is a way to collect information. For example, checklists can be used to discover vocational skills or interests. These are often most valuable when information is gathered from both the student and the student's family.

Completing **person-centered planning** can be a good process for gathering some transition-related assessment information (see Section 1).



## Write Measurable Postsecondary Goals

Education/Training

Employment

Independent Living (as needed)

### Measurable Post-Secondary Goals

**Post-secondary** means life after high school. What will students do after they leave school? Go to college? Go to work? Get their own apartment in the community? Measurable post-secondary goals are the goals for life after the student leaves school, which are different from annual IEP goals (for more information on annual IEP goals, read page 10). In a student's IEP during transition, the IEP team will write student goals for:

- 1) Education and Training
- 2) Employment
- 3) Independent living (as appropriate).

Some youth and their families may not understand why employment or college is important. Learn more about supports available for adults with disabilities at work and college in Section 3: Daily Life.

These options may help youth enjoy their life after high school.

Goals should be specific and written clearly so that it is possible to measure them. Do not list the same activities from a student's annual IEP goals. Post-secondary goals should include activities for life after high school. IEP goals should support post-secondary goals.



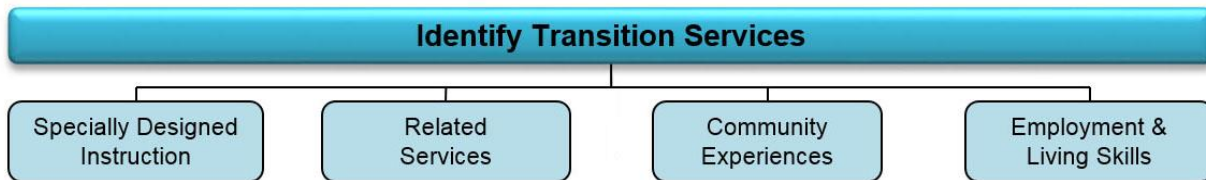
#### Goals must be clear and specific!

"Rahma will attend community college to study nursing after graduation"

"Rahma will take public transportation independently to go to college and work"

#### Bad example:

"After leaving high school, Rahma wants to go to college"

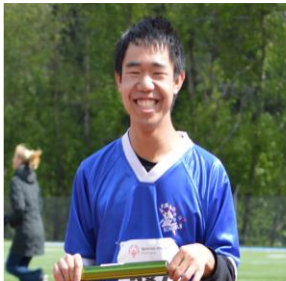


## Transition Services and Activities

Transition services may include **instruction, related services, community experiences**, and **independent living skills**. All services, regardless of type, should support the student in preparing for adult life and, in particular, achieving their post-secondary goals.

Post-secondary goals should be determined based on **age-appropriate transition assessment**.

### Mickle's Transition Services & Activities



- **Instruction:** Social, communication & work skills
- **Related services:** Speech Language Pathologist and Assistive Technology for communication
- **Community Experiences:** Customer/social skills at work site, field trips to community center
- **Life skills:** Cooking, taking paratransit from home to work





### **The Course of Study**

The course of study (instructional plan) can look different for each student, due to the need to support different post-secondary goals. The IEP Team must plan the course of study for each year a student is in high school.

#### **Examples:**

##### **Mickle's Employment-Focused Goals**

- Mickle will continue to receive specially designed instruction with an alternate curriculum, including instruction on self-care, communication skills. He will also participate in work experience in the community during his 4 years of high school.

##### **Rahma's Post-Secondary Education Goals**

- Rahma will continue to receive specially designed instruction in reading, math, writing, and social/behavior during her last 2 years of high school. After she graduates with a high school diploma, Rahma will attend community college to study nursing.





## Write the Annual IEP Goals

### Annual IEP goals

Annual IEP goals are short-term yearly goals. Once transition services are included in the IEP, IEP goals should support post-secondary goals.

#### Examples:

##### To Help Mickle Become Job Ready...

- **Annual Goal** Work Skills & Behavior:  
Given a community-based setting, Mickle will demonstrate the ability to be independent in his work skills and behavior. He will dress in his work uniform from 4/5 opportunities to 5/5 opportunities over 5 consecutive data measurements.

##### To Help Rahma Become College Ready...

- **Annual Goal** Study/Organization Skills:  
When given class assignments, Rahma will record at least one assignment or class topic per class. She will improve organization skills from an average of 0 out of 5 days per week to 4 out of 5 days per week as measured by teacher data collection



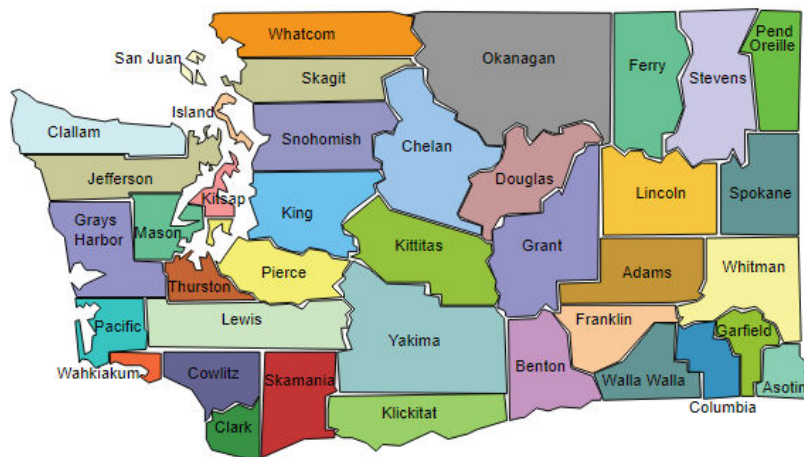
### Coordinate Services with Adult Agencies

Family and friends provide support to adults with disabilities. However, depending on a student's support needs, applying for eligibility-based services is important for students and their families.

#### Some examples of Adult Agencies include:

- Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Social Security Administration
- Home and Community Services (HCS)
- Medicaid

Students and families should start learning about agencies and services during high school. Application processes are different for each agency and will take time. To learn more about each agency, go to the **Appendix**.



To find contact information for agencies in your county, visit Center for Change in Transition Services' website at:

<https://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/agency-connections/>

## What is a Transition Program?

A **transition program** is generally designed for students ages 18-21 who continue to receive special education services from a public school district. A **transition program** provides experiences for a student planning for employment, going to college, or gaining independent living skills in accordance with a student's IEP.

The IEP team should discuss if a **transition program** is the right option. If students and their families are not sure, they can ask the Special Education Department in their school district about visiting a **transition program** or meeting transition teachers. Students, however, are not eligible to participate in a transition program once they graduate with a high school diploma. However, as long as a student remains eligible for special education services, they keep receiving those services for free.

## Why Is a Transition Program Important?

A **Transition Program** may provide learning experiences that help students make a smooth transition to engaged community living as adults.



Community experiences



Job-readiness training



College readiness



Instruction on daily living skills

## When and how am I going to graduate?

Graduation requirements look different in each state. In Washington, the requirements for high school graduation are<sup>ii</sup>:

- ☐ Earn high school credit
- ☐ Pass state tests or approved alternatives to those tests
  - Students who fulfill this by passing the standard tests earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) distinction
  - There are alternatives available for students with disabilities to fulfill this requirement. Students who use an alternative method earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) distinction.
  - Both methods meet the requirement for a regular high school diploma.
- ☐ Complete a High School and Beyond Plan

Keep in mind that requirements may change. However, the requirements that are in place in a student's 9<sup>th</sup> grade year will remain for that student, even if the requirements change afterward. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) updates requirements on their website.

In addition, individual school districts may have additional requirements.

## Why is a High School Diploma important?

Students need to earn a high school diploma or GED if they plan to go to college or want to get a job that requires a high school diploma. Remember that once a student graduates with a diploma, he/she is no longer eligible to receive special education services through the school district. The IEP team plans for this, to be sure the student receives all the necessary services before graduating.

## Do I get to walk in the graduation ceremony with my friends?

Yes. If a student with an IEP is going to participate in a transition program after four years of high school, the student will not get their high school diploma in the senior year of high school. However, under **Kevin's law (RCW 28A.155.170)**, a student with a disability can still request to participate in the graduation ceremony with their friends from the same senior class.

## Youth and Parents' Advice on School-Based Transition



*I was told I probably would not be able to graduate, get a job, or go to college. When people say “you cannot do it,” it puts you down. But don’t let anyone stop you. Try your best. Figure out what you need to do after you turn 21, because if you don’t plan transition, you won’t know what to do with your life. Now I know how to advocate for myself, because I got more learning experiences in college. Now I work at Trader Joe’s and am taking a quarter off. But I still have a hope of completing my degree and becoming a caseworker who advocates for people with disabilities.*



*When you have an IEP meeting, you should sit down. Don’t let your mom do the talking. Tell the teacher what you want and don’t want. If you don’t speak up, a teacher does not know what you like or what you don’t like, so it’s important to speak up.*



*My son is 18 and he started a Transition Program. I always make time to attend IEP meetings, so I know what and how he is learning, and what we can do at home. My son is working on his future. He is learning how to get ready for and become responsible for a job. He’s learning how to take the bus and make his own decisions. He loves it and he enjoys doing it. When I attend IEP meetings, I write down questions I want to ask teachers, so I feel prepared. I recommend other parents make time to be part of the meetings—because we know our child the best.*



*If you don’t tell others what you want, no one can help you. If I don’t tell you what I need, people won’t know what I need. At the IEP meetings, everyone will talk about you and hopefully they ask you what you need or what you want. But if they don’t, I will suggest everyone to try to talk. Tell them what you want, instead of what the parents or teachers want. Because the IEP is for you. not for them.*



*I would advise other students to try new experiences. In my transition program, I set a goal to get a job in retail because I like fashion and shopping. I started to work at the student store, and then the gift shop at a hospital to learn about customer service and handling money. I’m doing all of these so I can learn about working.*



## **Dispute Resolution—Resolving Problems with Schools**

Everyone cares about students' education and growth. However, when students, parents, and professionals have different perspectives, issues can arise. This is especially true when there are cultural differences. In addition to knowing parent and student rights, knowing how to resolve a conflict with a school is important.

## **Special Education Complaints**

If you believe your school district has failed to provide a service in your child's IEP, or that they have not met other state or federal requirements related to special education, there are several steps you can take<sup>iii</sup>:

- Try to resolve the issues informally with the IEP team
- Mediation
- Filing a Special Education Citizen Complaint
- Requesting a Due Process hearing

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's website has more information about these options, and how to pursue them.

## **Civil Rights Dispute Complaints**

If students or parents experience discrimination, unfair/unequal treatment or harassment at school based on:

- Race and color
- National Origin (language)
- Religion and creed
- Sex
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender expression
- Gender identity
- Veteran or military status
- Use of a trained dog guide or service animal

There are several steps they can take<sup>iv</sup>.

1. Talk with your principal or civil rights coordinator in the district
2. File a discrimination complaint with your school district
3. File a discrimination complaint with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
4. File a discrimination complaint with the Human Rights Commission
5. Contact the Equity and Civil Rights office

To learn more about Dispute Resolution and interpreter services, go to the resource page (p.16).

## How Can I Resolve an Issue with My School?

If you have similar issue with following students and parents, you may want to find the ways to resolve the issue!

**Student 1:** If a school asks my brother or sister to interpret, I need to tell them no. The school has to provide an interpreter. It's my right and my parent's right.

**Student 2:** My annual IEP goals were not updated for 3 years. My mom and I didn't know what was going on, because we didn't know what the school was supposed to do.

**Student 3:** I wanted to get a job doing some office work when I graduate. But in the first year of my transition program, my job-site was mostly in school, cleaning the cafeteria. It was not what I'm interested in and it was hard for me to walk around since I have medical condition, but no one listened to me.

**Parent 1:** In the last year of high school, my transition program teacher told me that my son cannot go to a transition program because he has a record of behavioral issues. My son does not speak English and he also receives special education. He acted out because he didn't understand what was going on. I want him to get the right support and go to a transition program, so he can learn how to help himself more at home and even get work.

**Parent 2:** The special education teacher told us that my daughter has been failing algebra class and it's likely she won't graduate with a high school diploma. She's smart, but because of her disability, math is very challenging. But she has been taking the same math class in general education every year since then. I don't understand why she needs to take a math class when it doesn't do any good. I heard that another student in special education is no longer taking algebra, and he's working on the functional math. I don't know how that works for my daughter.

## Resources

### Parent and Student Rights

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

- Procedural Safeguards (available in different languages): <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Families/Rights.aspx>
- Section 504 regulations (available in different languages): <http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/Section504.aspx>
- Dispute Resolution: <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/DisputeResolution/default.aspx>
- Requesting an interpreter: <http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/Interpretation.aspx>

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

- Complaints about discrimination: <http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/ComplaintOptions.aspx>

The Governor's Office of Education Ombuds (OEO)

- Publications on Basic Education Rights and more for Parents: <http://oeo.wa.gov/publications-reports/publications/>

OEO is part of the Washington State's Governor's Office and is there to resolve problems between families, students, and public schools in all areas that affect student learning, but primarily around:

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| • Special Education   | • Enrollment        |
| • Bullying/Harassment | • Transportation    |
| • Suspension          | • Academic Progress |
| • Discipline          | • Truancy           |
| • Expulsion           | • and more          |

OEO is independent from the public school. However, OEO does not have power for corrective action, but helps communication between students, families and school to resolve issue without formal process, which may take more time. OEO provides an interpreter upon request.

### Community Based Supports & Resources:

- Washington PAVE: <http://wapave.org/>
- Open Doors for Multicultural Families: <http://multiculturalfamilies.org>
- Independent Living Center: Find your local chapter at <http://www.wasilc.org/> under the "IL center" tab
- The Arc: Find local chapter at [http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local\\_arc\\_chapters](http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local_arc_chapters)

<sup>i</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2016). Parent and Student Rights (Procedural Safeguards). <http://www.k12.wa.us/specialed/families/rights.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2016). Washington State Graduation Requirements. <http://www.k12.wa.us/GraduationRequirements/>

<sup>iii</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2013). Dispute Resolution. <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/DisputeResolution/default.aspx>

<sup>iv</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2016). Complaints About Discrimination. <http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/ComplaintOptions.aspx>



## Life After High School Section 3: Daily Life



**ENGLISH**

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## Section 3: Daily Life

What does everyday life look like after we finish school?  
As we get older, our daily activities change. In this section, we ask important questions about daily life.

### This section will cover:

1. After high school, what will your daily life look like?
  - What do you want to do during the daytime when school is over?
  - What kind of supports do you need during the day and who will provide them?
  - How will these changes impact family finances and daily life?
2. **Transition to Adult Daily Life (or Individual & Family Life)**
  - What are **Independent Living Skills** and why are they important?
3. **Options for Life after High School**
  - **Work:** What support is available for youths with disabilities?
  - **Education:** How is postsecondary different from high school? How do I request an **accommodation**?
  - **Other** (options): Volunteering, recreational activities, adult day services, and more.

### Appendix

- What are Eligibility-Based Services?
  - What is Developmental Disabilities Administration?
  - What is Division of Vocational Rehabilitation?

### For Youth:

- Learn importance of becoming more independent as an adult.
- Learn different options for life after high school.
- Learn about the types of support and accommodations you need to succeed.
- Explore assistive technology to help you succeed in your daily life, work, and school.

### For Family & Caregivers:

- Learn and access available supports and resources to maximize youth options for the future.
- Support youth who make decisions that reflect their interest and strengths.

## Daily Life After High School



While in school, learn what types of support students have now and what types of support they are missing. This helps students and families explore new resources they did not consider.

Accessing eligibility-based support services is an important option, however not all students qualify for these services.

Transition should focus on strengths, developing skills needed for daily life, and identifying supports that may not rely on paid services.

If youth and families need help navigating their situation, get a help from professionals and community organizations (see resources page.)

### Youth Story

*“In my transition program, my teachers were helping me prepare for getting a job. But in the last year of the transition program, when we tried to apply for employment services, I was disqualified because I’m not a U.S. citizen and I wouldn’t qualify for DDA’s waiver services. I have a permanent residency card (Green Card) so I can legally work in the US and I could apply for DVR. But without long-term supported employment services from DDA, I cannot continue working in the community. My Transition IEP team did not know what to do.*

*I would advise other youth in similar situations to think about building the skills that help you in different aspect of life—because working on job-related skills can help me at home—taking care of myself. Connecting to a support network that does not require eligibility is important.”*



## Transitioning to Adult Life: Becoming Independent

### What is Independent Living?

Independent living does not always mean living alone. It also means knowing how to take care of ourselves and meet our daily needs, even when we live with other people. For example:

#### Ricardo's breakfast chores

- set table
- eat breakfast
- bring dish to sink
- load dishwasher



#### Jessica's chores on Sunday

- plug in vacuum
- vacuum floor
- toss dust into garbage
- take out garbage



#### Jean's routine in Korean cooking class

- decide menu
- make grocery list
- go grocery shopping with friends
- cook food with friends
- eat food together!



### Why is Independent Living Important?

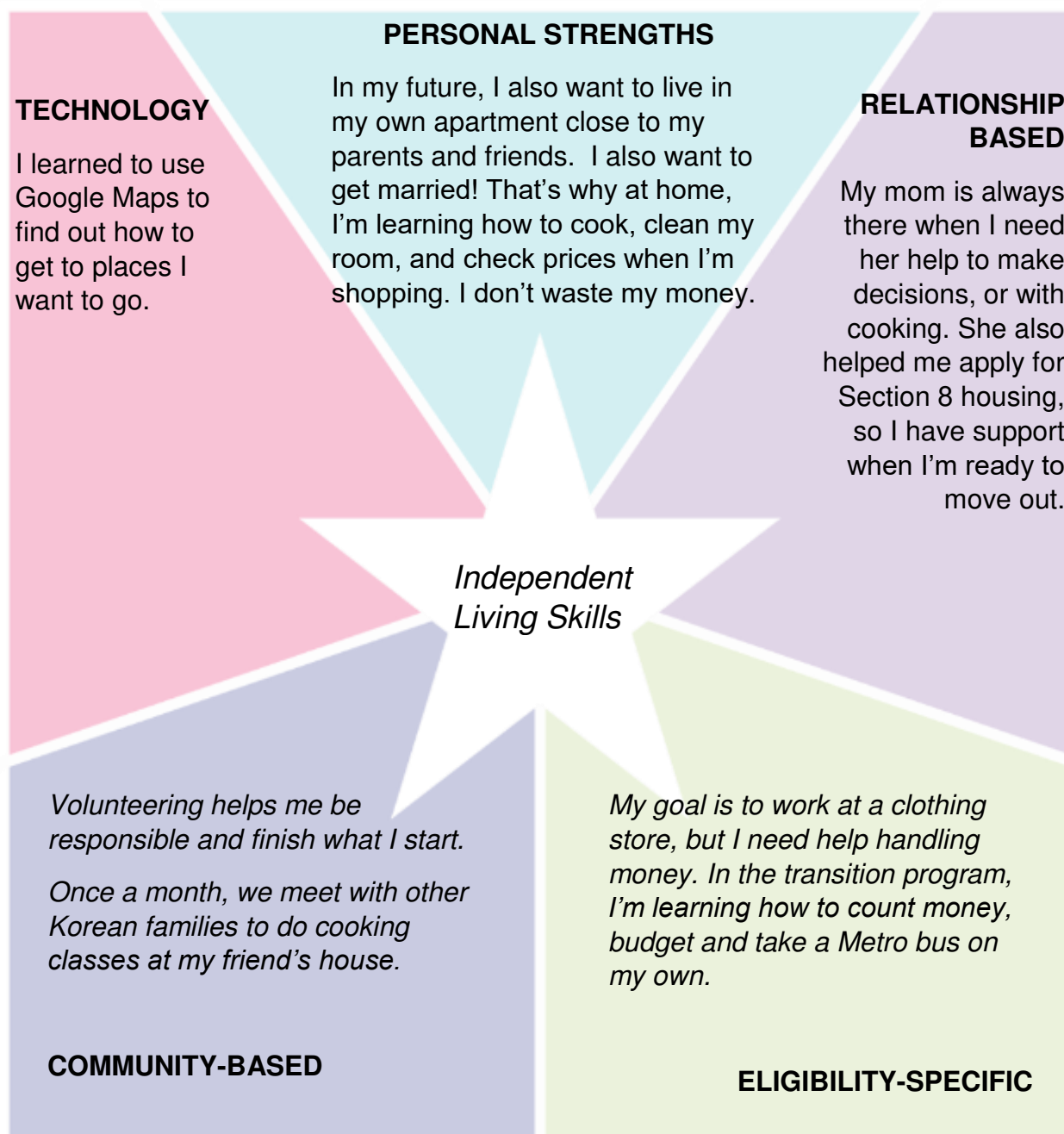
As youth learn to do more on their own, different experiences will help them discover their strengths, as well as types of supports they need and what works best for them. **Independent Living Skills** also build confidence.

At home or at school, it is important for students to explore experiences and opportunities that build adult life skills.



*I know my son has a disability and I know that there are things he cannot do. However, I tell my son he can do anything he wants. I want my son to get a job, live by himself in an apartment, and be able to pay for it. Since he was young, I have taught him chores every day. When he wakes up, he eats breakfast, cleans the table, and washes dishes. He also washes and folds clothes. Now, he's doing similar things for his job training in a transition program. He's good at it and he loves it. Every day at the house is like a training.*

## Youth Story: Jean



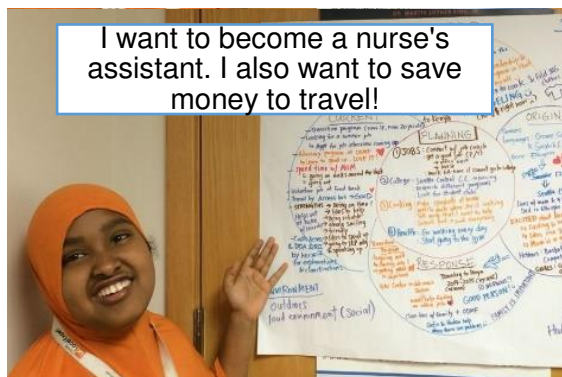
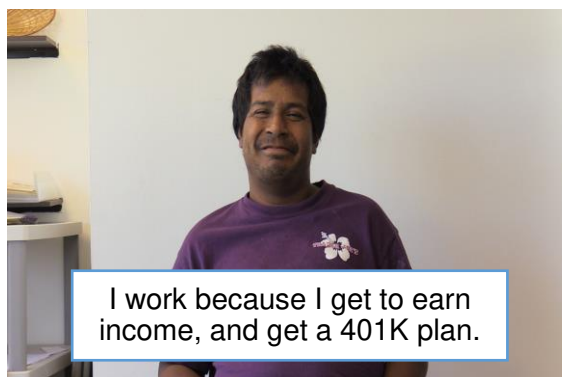
*When you are little, your parents cook and help you out. But when you become an adult, you need to do it yourself. It's challenging, so that's why practice is important.*

## Options After High School: Employment

### Why Employment?

Does getting a job help youth achieve their future goals? Does it help youth avoid what they don't want in their life? A good first step for discovering why employment may be right for a youth, and what type of work they may enjoy, is to complete a **Person Centered Plan** with them. Read more about Person Centered Planning in Section 1: Self-Discovery!

There are many reasons why a youth may want to get a job after high school!





## How can I get a job?

Many people with disabilities work when they become an adult. If a person with disability experiences challenges with finding and keeping a job, learn about supports available for them. There are ways to find a job that matches the abilities and strengths that people with disabilities have!




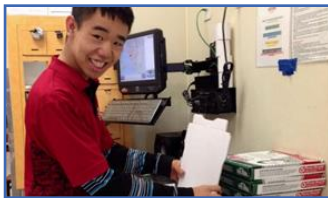
I want to work... but I didn't know how to...

- be ready for a job
- find, apply for, and keep a job
- learn skills needed for work
- request an accommodation at work
- commute to work on my own

If youths need support like Mickle, learn about **supported** and **customized employment** and what services **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** provides to people who want to work! If youths need ongoing support, qualifying for **Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)** by age 21 is also important.

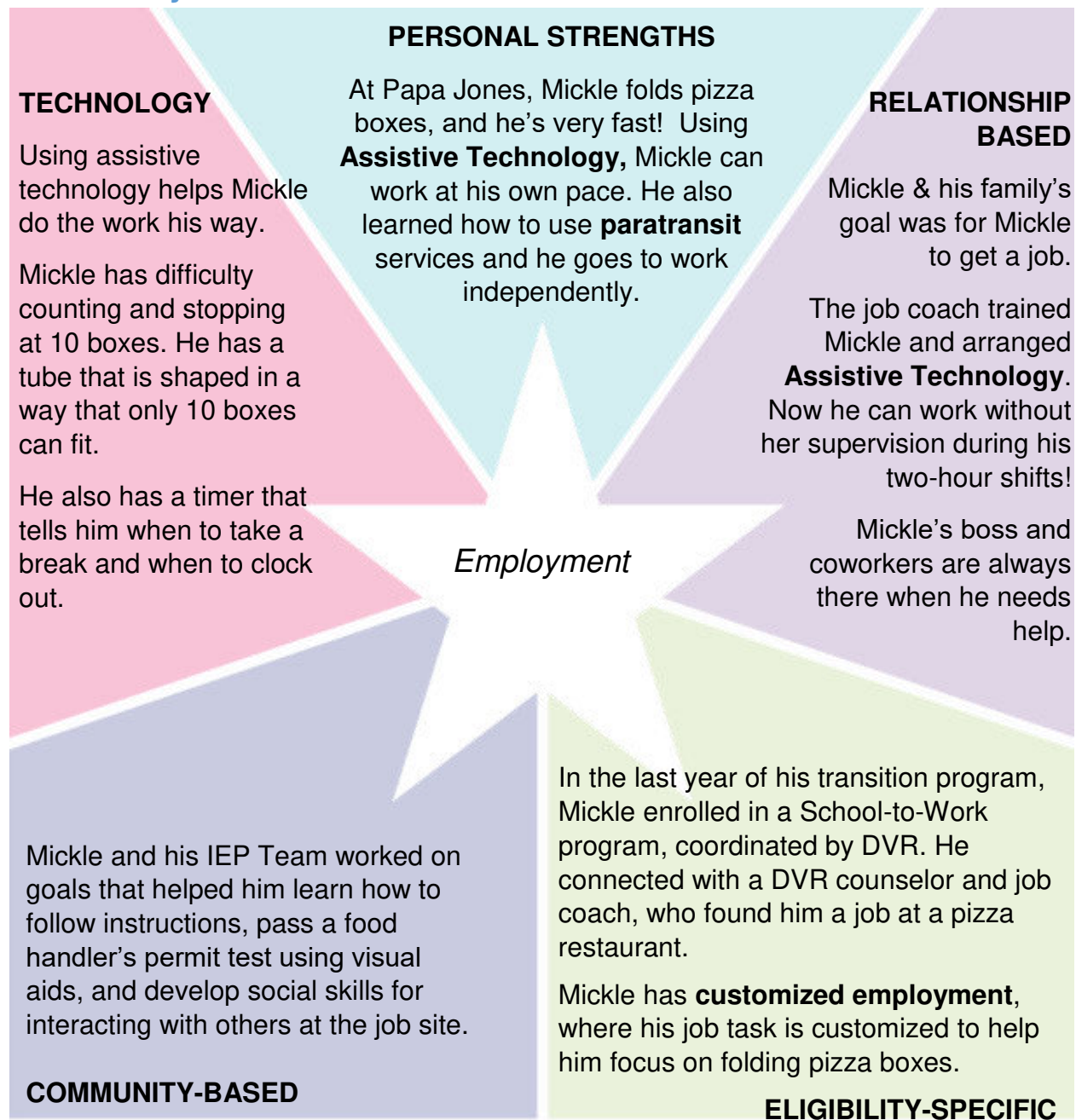
Youths can learn when and how to talk about their disability with an employer by visiting the [411 Disability Disclosure](#) website.

## What is Supported and Customized Employment?<sup>v vi</sup>

Supported Employment	Customized Employment
 <p>A person with disabilities gets a job in the community with competitive wage with a job coach who supports with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• finding a job,</li><li>• getting trained for the job; and</li><li>• keeping the job.</li></ul>	 <p>A person with disabilities gets a job in the community with competitive wage and "customized" job position.</p> <p>Job tasks are customized to match the interests, skills, and abilities of a person with disabilities that also meets the needs of the employer.</p> <p>Read Mickle's example! (p.8)</p>

The type of support depends on youths' interests, skills, and abilities. Youths can work with their job coach to find the right kind of employment! To receive these supports, youths need to qualify for services from **DVR** or **DDA**. To learn more about DVR or DDA, see the **Appendix** section.

## Youth story: Mickle



## Options After High School: College and University

Many students with disabilities also consider attending college or university to study the subjects they are interested in, and to get a degree related to the job they want. When applying to college, it is important for students with disabilities to think about what accommodations they will need in their classes as well as the type of college environment that will best meet their needs as they work to meet their education and career goals.<sup>ii</sup>

### Helping Youth Prepare for College



Parents can help or encourage their student to:

- explore college as an option.
  - Start with **Person-Centered Planning**. Speak to the DDA Case Manager or DVR Counselor for funding options.
- find the right college to meet their support needs (program, disability resource center, campus environment, or assistive technology).
  - Some colleges and universities have programs for students with intellectual disabilities. Visit <http://www.thinkcollege.net>
- take challenging classes that prepare them for college.
- participate in community activities (e.g. volunteer, club, work study, or internship) and explore career interests.
- get support from school—talk to school counselors, IEP teacher, and other school professionals.
- practice self-advocacy and independent living skills, such as leading their IEP meetings, using public transportation, requesting accommodations, and scheduling their own appointments.

## High School vs. College<sup>vii,viii,ix</sup>

This table explains some differences between high school and college:

High School	College/University
<b>Law &amp; Responsibility</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is an <i>entitlement</i> law.</li> <li>- Schools will identify and evaluate student needs for support.</li> <li>- Schools will reach out if a student needs assistance to succeed.</li> <li>- Parents have access to student records, participate in meetings and share input.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adults with Disability Act and Section 504 are <i>non-discrimination</i> laws.</li> <li>- Students must disclose and advocate for their needs for support.</li> <li>- Colleges do not reach out if a student needs assistance to succeed.</li> <li>- FERPA<sup>1</sup> prevents parents from accessing student records without the student's consent.</li> </ul>
<b>Instruction, Grades, Tests, &amp; Tutoring</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An IEP or 504 plan may include modifications for curriculum pace, testing, formatting, or grading that teachers must accommodate.</li> <li>- Students' coursework is chosen based on state requirements.</li> <li>- An IEP may include tutoring and study support.</li> <li>- Counselors are available to assist students with their course of study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In college, instructors are not required to provide accommodations unless students have appropriate documentation for their disability.</li> <li>- Students choose classes that match their abilities and interests.</li> <li>- Students must seek tutoring services available to ALL students.</li> <li>- It is important to connect to the 504 coordinator.</li> </ul>
<b>Admission &amp; Finance</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most students are placed in a high school based on where they live.</li> <li>- Schools provide educational services to students with disabilities at no cost to students or their families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students must apply for admission to the college/university of their choice.</li> <li>- Students pay tuition—a cost to attend college. It is important to apply for financial aid.</li> </ul>

If students need accommodations, learn when and how to talk about their own disabilities with the Disability Resource Center at colleges and universities. To learn more, visit the [411 Disability Disclosure](#) website.

Colleges and universities that receive federal funds have an obligation to provide certain accommodations under Section 504 and Title II of the Adults with Disabilities Act. Learn more at:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>

<sup>1</sup> Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he/she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Visit <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html> to learn more.

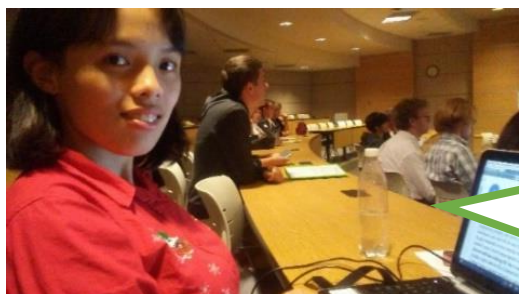
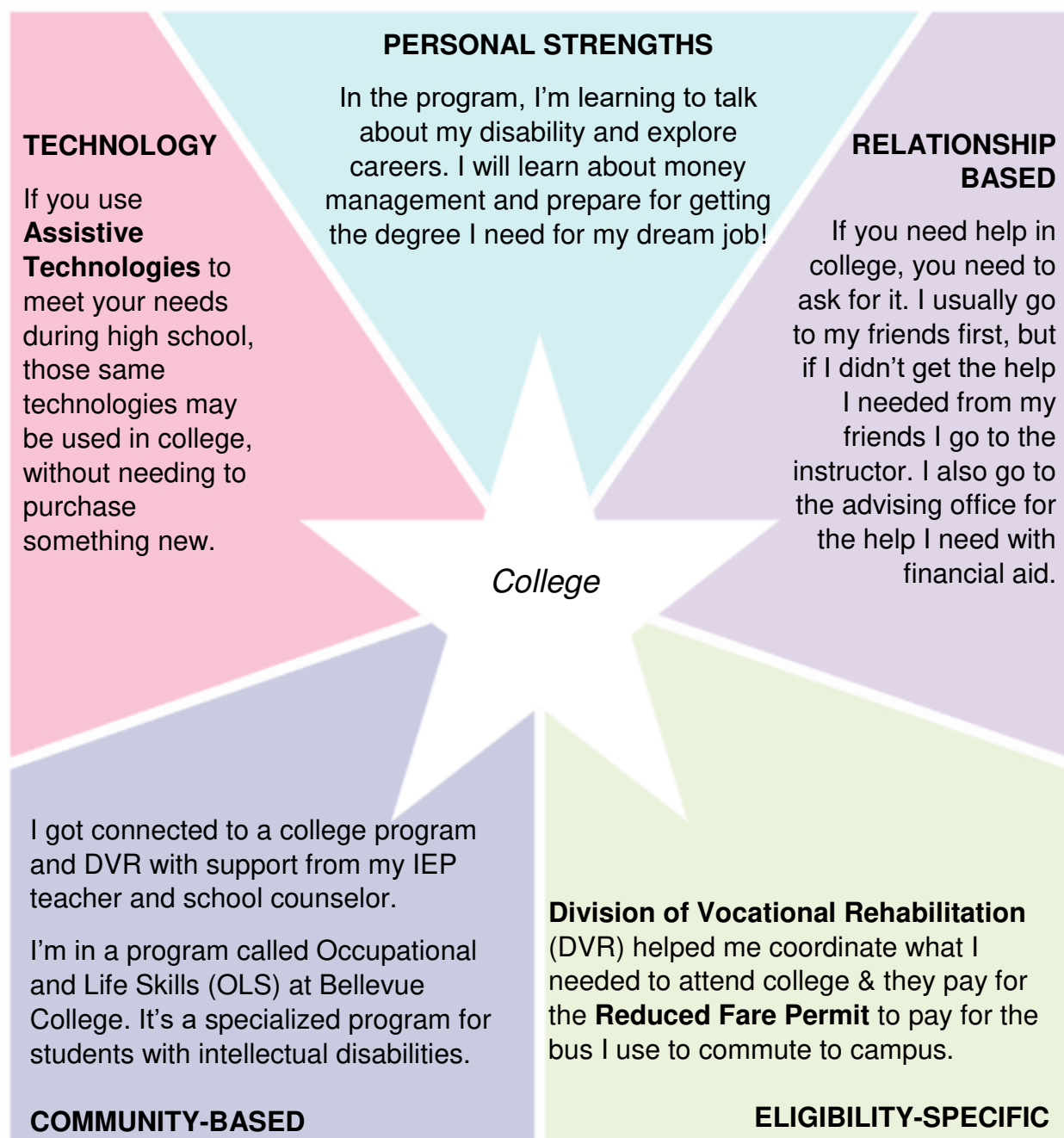
## How to Pay for College

Higher education is expensive, so it is important for students and families to explore all their options to pay for college. Here are some examples:

1. Apply for financial aid using the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**.
  - a. The federal deadline for FAFSA applications is June 30<sup>th</sup>.  
However, states and individual colleges set their own individual deadlines, which are often earlier. It is important to check early with your university's financial aid office to make sure you do not miss that deadline. Visit [https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/filling-out to apply](https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/filling-out-to-apply).
  - b. Learn about different types of student aid at:  
<https://studentaid.ed.gov>. [Check with your college's financial aid office to learn about their separate opportunities for financial aid.](#)
  - c. Non-U.S. citizens may need to meet additional qualifications.  
Make sure to check information at:  
<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/non-us-citizens>
2. Find information about different scholarships.
  - a. <http://www.affordablecolleges.com/>
  - b. <http://www.affordablecolleges.com/resources/scholarships-students-with-disabilities/>
3. DVR support for post-secondary education goals<sup>i</sup>
  - a. When an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) lists education costs as a student goal, DVR may help a student pay for tuition and books. The VR agency and student must provide alternate sources of funding before DVR can provide additional financial support.<sup>ii</sup>



## Youth Story: Ky



I didn't know what I wanted to study at college. Now I feel like I want to become an accountant or an interpreter, a passion I found from volunteering. College experience has helped me discover my goal!

## Resources

These resources may help you and your child plan for his/her daily life after high school.

### Eligibility-Based Adult Services in WA

- Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA): <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda>
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR): <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/division-vocational-rehabilitation>
- The Agency Connection page through Center for Change in Transition Services may help you find local resources on employment, health & emergency, housing, post-secondary education, recreation and leisure, and transportation: <https://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/agency-connections/>

### Community Based Supports & Resources:

- Washington PAVE: <http://wapave.org/>
- Open Doors for Multicultural Families: <http://www.multiculturalfamilies.org>
- Independent Living Center: Find your local chapter at <http://www.wasilc.org/> under the “IL center” tab
- The Arc: Find local chapter at [http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local\\_arc\\_chapters](http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local_arc_chapters)

### Applying & Preparing for College

- Applying for College: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/applying>
  - This website explains the process of applying for college, and has links to other resources.
- Choosing Schools: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college/choosing-schools>
  - [This site has information about steps you can take to research possible colleges or career schools.](#)
- Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html>
  - This resource has information about auxiliary aids (assistive technology) in college and university.
- Prepare for College: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college>
- University of Washington Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT): <http://www.washington.edu/doit/> and <http://www.washington.edu/doit/programs>

### Specialized College Programs for Students with Developmental or Intellectual Disabilities.

- Think College: This website has many resources for students with developmental or intellectual disabilities. You can search for resources, find a college, and look at what is happening in your state. <http://www.thinkcollege.net>
- Highline College
  - ACHIEVE Program: <https://achieve.highline.edu/>
- Bellevue College
  - Occupational Life Skills (OLS): <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/ols/>
  - Autism Spectrum Navigators: <https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/autismspectrumnavigators/>
- University of Washington
  - Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology (DO-IT): <http://www.washington.edu/doit/> and <http://www.washington.edu/doit/programs>
- Washington State University
- Responsibility, Opportunities, Advocacy, and Respect (ROAR): <https://education.wsu.edu/graduate/specialed/wsuroar/>

# MY LIFE COURSE Portfolio

What types of experiences impact your future?

List **PAST & CURRENT** experiences  
that support you move toward your GOOD LIFE

List **FUTURE** experiences  
you want to move toward your GOOD LIFE

List **ANY EXPERIENCES**  
that push you toward life you DON'T want

What I **DON'T** want

My vision for GOOD LIFE





# MY LIFE COURSE Portfolio

One page profile for \_\_\_\_\_

**What people like & admire about ME**

**What's Important to ME**

**How to Best Support ME**

**ENGLISH**

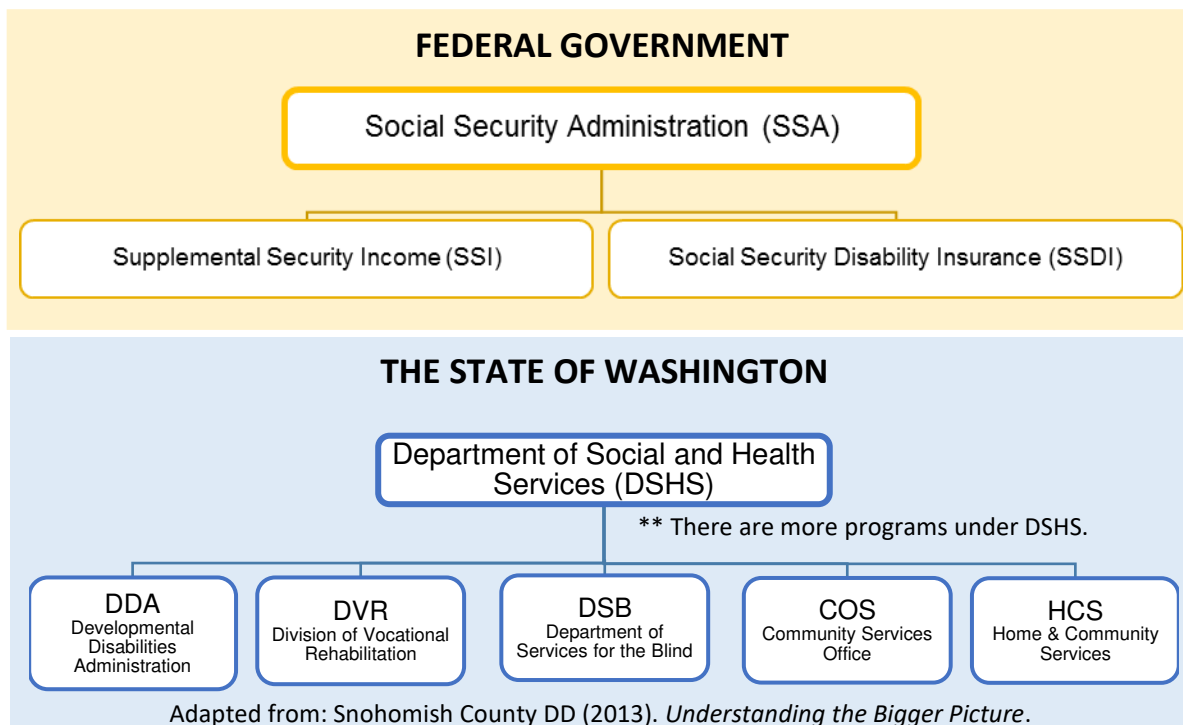


# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What are Eligibility-based Services?

**Eligibility-based services** are services that you need to apply and qualify for in order to receive the services. Many eligibility-based services for adults with disabilities are available from federal government (e.g. Social Security Administration), or State's different departments under the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in Washington State.



## KEY TO SUCCESS

Start learning about adult services early.

Each adult service agencies have its own application and eligibility requirements. To be successful with your transition to life after high school, be familiar with:

- Types of services provided under each program
- Eligibility criteria (or qualifications); and
- Documents needed to apply

## Need Help?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Family Support Specialist.

Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What is Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)?<sup>2</sup>

**Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)** serves a person with developmental and intellectual disabilities (DD/ID) and their families. The goal of DDA is to support a person with DD/ID to live the life they want with a network of community-based supports & services.

An individual with DD/ID can apply to DDA at any age, but NOT all individuals with DD/ID will be eligible for DDA or services.



To apply for DDA services in WA, an individual must:

- ☑ Be a WA state resident
  - ☑ Have a documented condition that qualifies for DDA **before** age 18.
- Visit [www.dshs.wa.gov/dda](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda) and click on [Eligibility](#)

## Important Information to know about DDA

1. You can apply to DDA at any age, but it is **highly recommended before you leave high school.**
2. If you are denied eligibility, you can either request a fair hearing.
3. Reapply for eligibility if you have new diagnostic information or IQ testing that DDA did not review for your previous determination.
4. Getting a DDA eligibility notice does NOT mean you will get services automatically. DDA's service is provided based on individuals' needs and funding. Call DDA office for a "needs-based assessment"
5. Some DDA services available through DDA depend on **age**, **available funding**, and whether an individual qualifies for **Medicaid**.
6. DDA eligibility expires at ages 4 and 10. Eligibility is reviewed at age 19 for most clients. You will receive notices in the mail with further instructions if child's eligibility is expiring or being reviewed.
7. DDA provides an interpreter free of charge.

**\*\*** Make sure to inform DDA office if your contact information change.

[www.informingfamilies.org](http://www.informingfamilies.org) website has more detailed information about [Applying to DDA services in WA](#), [Roadmap to waiver services](#), and [DDA Waiver services](#).

<sup>2</sup> Developmental Disabilities Administration. *What we do*. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda>

### Need Help?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Family Support Specialist.

Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## Why is applying to Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Important?

For individuals requiring long-term support, applying for DDA services is especially important because:

- DDA can provide supports in your home, at work, and in the community
- DDA can provide long term employment support
- DDA can support an individual's ongoing medical and behavioral support needs



DDA emphasizes Person-Centered-Planning to build a support based on preferences, needs, and strengths.

If you need help with understanding DDA programs & services, contact your local DDA office: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/DDA/dda/find-an-office>

**\*\*** DDA has brochures about different services, many of them translated into: Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. See: [www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/publications/dda-brochures](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/publications/dda-brochures)

### **Need help navigating services in your own language?**

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Bilingual Family Support Specialist.  
Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)

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# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)?

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** helps individuals with disabilities who want to work but experience challenges with finding and keeping a job.

In order to receive services from DVR, an individual needs to apply and qualify for them.



To apply for DVR services in WA, an individual must:

- ☑ Be a U.S. citizen or have a valid Employment Authorization Document.
- ☑ Have a documented condition that qualifies for DVR

Visit [www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr) for more information.

Once an individual is eligible for DVR, DVR provides services such as:



Counseling and guidance



Assessment



Benefits planning



Job-related services



Assistive technology services



Independent living services



Training and education

Learn more about DVR services at: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/division-vocational-rehabilitation/services-individuals-disabilities>

### Need Help?

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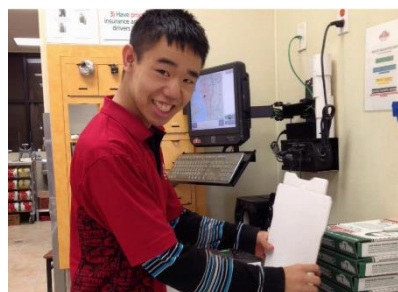


# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## Important Information to Know about DVR

1. Individuals must be a US citizen or have a valid work permit (Green card) in order to receive DVR services.
2. DVR support is short-term (up to 90 days after gaining employment). Support ends after the counselor ensures that the individual can keep their job.
3. Individuals who require ongoing support to keep a job must become a client of DDA and Medicaid, and qualify for **supported employment** services (see section on DDA services).
4. Many people start by receiving support through DVR to get a job.
5. DVR provides a language interpreter free of charge.



Contact a DVR office near you, or the DVR counselor assigned to your school at: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/RA/dvr/school-transition>.

For Information about the Washington State Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, visit [www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr) and click on [Tribal VR Programs](#).

### Need help navigating services in your own language?

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# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What is Benefits Planning?<sup>3</sup>

Benefits planning is for anyone who wants to work and is receiving cash, medical, housing, food benefits and/or personal care services. A benefits counselor will help individuals understand the impact of work on their benefits and how to use work incentive programs.

## Important Information about Benefits Counseling

1. Many people think that they cannot receive disability benefits if they work, but this is not true. People with disabilities can earn income from work and keep their benefits through a work incentive program.
2. To be eligible for these programs, you must be:
  - a. Receiving a SSI and/or SSDI
  - b. Between 14 years old and retirement age and
  - c. Considering employment or employed.
3. Benefits planning helps to:
  - a. Understand how benefits will be impacted by work,
  - b. Allow you to work as much as possible without worrying about keeping benefits,
  - c. Learn about Social Security work incentives and other programs help for items and services you need to keep your job, and
  - d. Find out about healthcare options that match your needs.
4. Calculate how income impacts your benefits at:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/ssi-grant-calculation-earned-income>

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<sup>3</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. *Benefits planning*.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/division-vocational-rehabilitation/benefits-planning>

### Need Help?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Family Support Specialist.

Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## Where do I get support for Benefits Planning?

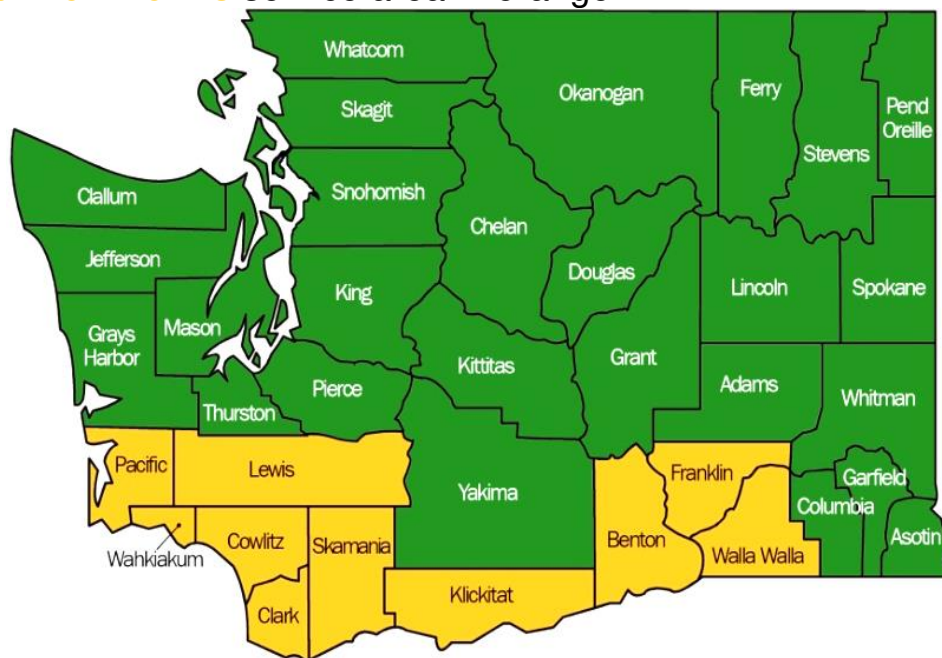
If you are a client of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), you can request benefit planning services.

Washington State also has two statewide benefits counseling programs: **Plan to Work** and **Plan for Work**.

- Both programs are free to eligible participants
- Both programs offer the same services and are available across the state.
- You can access services in-person or by phone.

This map shows:

- **Plan to Work's** service area in green
- **Plan for Work's** service area in orange



(Source: <http://community-minded.org/plan-to-work>)

To enroll with **Plan to Work**, call 866-497-9443, go to [www.plantowork.org](http://www.plantowork.org).

To make an appointment with **Plan for Work**, email [pfw@DROregon.org](mailto:pfw@DROregon.org) or call 1-800-452-1694, x 227 (toll-free) or 503-243-2081.

\*Leave a voicemail with your name, contact information and interest in benefits planning.

## Need Help?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Family Support Specialist.

Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What is Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) Program?<sup>4</sup>

Through the **Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) Program**, workers with disabilities can purchase medical coverage with a monthly fee that is adjusted by their income.

HWD provides access to Medicaid Personal Care services and Home and Community Based waiver programs by Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and Home and Community Services (HCS).

## Important Information about HWD<sup>5</sup>

1. Eligibility requirements include:
  - a. Be age 16 through 64
  - b. Meet federal disability requirements (same as SSA)
  - c. Be employed full or part-time (including self-employment) and
  - d. Have monthly income that does not exceed 220% of the federal poverty level.
2. HWD is affordable. The price is adjusted by your income (no more than 7.5% of total monthly income).
3. To apply, go to: [www.washingtonconnections.org](http://www.washingtonconnections.org).
4. A person who is receiving another Medicaid program may choose not to participate in HWD program.
5. A person is NOT eligible for the HWD coverage for a month person received Medicaid benefits under the Medically Needy Program.

## Remember:

If you receive disability benefits and want to work, contact Plan to Work or Plan for Work. These programs can help you earn income and keep your benefits.

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<sup>4</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. *Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD)*. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/apple-health-workers-disabilities-hwd-program>

<sup>5</sup> WAC 182-511-1000 HWD program description, June 25, 2015

## Need Help?

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Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What are Social Security Benefits?<sup>6</sup>

The federal **Social Security Administration (SSA)** provides **cash assistance** to people with disabilities through two programs:

- I. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and;
- II. Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

For more information on SSDI and SSI, please take a look at Table 1: Comparison of the SSDI and SSI and Table 2: Social Security Work Incentives.

## Important Information to Know about Social Security benefits

1. Apply for Social Security benefits BEFORE you turn age 18. The process takes between three and five months, or longer.
  - a. Apply online at: [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or;
  - b. Call 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment at your local Social Security office or to set up a phone appointment.
2. SSA has strict eligibility criteria by disability condition.
3. If you are a non-U.S. citizen, you must have a certain immigration status or become a citizen in order to receive benefits through SSA.
4. [If you want to work, there are ways to keep Social Security benefits while working through benefits planning \(see page. 9\).](#)
5. SSA provides a language interpreter free of charge. Learn more at: [www.ssa.gov/multilanguage/langlist1.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/multilanguage/langlist1.htm)
6. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, SSA also provides a toll-free TTY number: 1-800-325-0078 between 7am and 7pm on business days.

**To find your local Social Security office, visit:**

<https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from [Planning My Way to Work](#). Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities with a permission

### Need Help?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Family Support Specialist.

Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

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<sup>i</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2016). Parent and Student Rights (Procedural Safeguards).

<http://www.k12.wa.us/specialed/families/rights.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2016). Washington State Graduation Requirements.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/GraduationRequirements/>

<sup>iii</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2013). Dispute Resolution.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/DisputeResolution/default.aspx>

<sup>iv</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2016). Complaints About Discrimination.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/ComplaintOptions.aspx>

<sup>v</sup> "Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information & Exchange (CIRRIE)." University of Buffalo.

Retrieved from: <http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/encyclopedia/en/article/123/>

<sup>vi</sup> Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (2017). A transition guide to postsecondary education and employment for students and youth with disabilities. US Department of Education. Retrieved from:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/transition/products/postsecondary-transition-guide-2017.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> High School vs College: <http://www.keene.edu/office/disabilitysvs/resources/student/differences/>

<sup>viii</sup> Think College!: <http://www.thinkcollege.net/topics/highschool-college-differences>

<sup>ix</sup> OSPI (2016). Child Find: <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/ProgramReview/Monitoring/ChildFind.aspx>

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## Life After High School Section 4: Security and Health





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## **Section 4: Security and Health**

As you become an adult, you need to think more about managing your own money and health. In this section, we ask important questions about financial security and health.

### **This Section will cover:**

- 1. What changes happen at age 18**
- 2. Legal Safety**
  - a. What is Supported Decision making?**
  - b. What is Guardianship and Alternatives to Guardianship?**
- 3. Financial Safety**
  - a. What is Money Management Skills?**
  - b. Eligibility-based Financial Support for adults with disabilities**
- 4. Healthcare Transition**
  - a. What is healthcare transition?**
  - b. Eligibility-based Healthcare Support for adults with disabilities**
- 5. Appendix: Legal information & Eligibility-based services**

### **For Youth:**

- Learn your responsibilities as an adult once you turn 18.
- Learn important skills you need to manage your money.
- Learn important skills you need to manage your health and medical needs.
- Practice making decisions about your finances and health, with or without support from adults.
- Identify and apply for eligibility-based services that match your needs.

### **For Family & Caregivers:**

- Learn about what changes when your youth turns age 18.
- Support youth to make important decisions about their legal rights, finances, and health.
- Consider alternatives to guardianship before taking away youth's rights.
- Support youth to learn skills they need to manage their own money and healthcare.
- Identify and apply for eligibility-based services that match the needs of the youth and the family.

## What changes happen at age 18?

Parents or guardians of children with disabilities have been playing a big role in making life decisions about:



Education



Health



Money  
Management



Legal decisions

However, in the United States, when youth turns 18 years old, parents or guardians will no longer have legal authority to make decisions for their youth without their permission or obtaining a legal guardianship.

This section will cover how parents and caregivers can help their youth with disabilities and special healthcare needs make **supported decisions**<sup>1</sup> that impact their finances, health and rights after they turn 18.

**Supported decision** means parents and caregivers support their youth to make as many decisions as they can to maximize their control and choice.

Assist me making decisions *myself*!



Respect our rights to make choices with:

- Who I want to spend time with;
- Where I want to live and work;
- How I want to spend my money; and
- How I want to be cared for.

(Find more at: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/age-of-majority-parentguide/>)

## Message to Parents and Caregivers



*“As a parent, we all want to make sure our sons’ and daughters’ wellbeing is protected. But that doesn’t mean all parents need to get a legal guardianship over their adult child with disabilities.*

*I want to encourage parents to think and also respect that our sons or daughters are now adults. When they become adults, they also have to learn to take care of themselves. And in fact, many of our children are very capable.*

*We can teach our children how to make decisions with our support based on their abilities. For example, make a visual schedule that reminds youth ‘when the alarm clock goes off, it’s time to go take your medication.’ Start from there, and gradually they can learn how to make their own decisions about finances or health.”*



## What is Guardianship?

A **guardianship** is a legal process where a court decides that an adult person with disabilities is not capable of making decisions about some or all aspects of their life, and appoints a guardian. The **guardian** is the person who will make decisions on behalf of the adult with disabilities. Guardians must be approved by the court, must complete a training, and their decision-making responsibilities will depend on how much support the adult with disabilities needs.

Before pursuing a legal guardianship, it is important to understand what guardianship means, explore alternative options to guardianship, and decide the best option for supporting a youth with disabilities to make important decisions about their adult life.

## What are Alternatives to Guardianship?

There are several alternatives to legal guardianship for adults with disabilities, and they vary according to how much support the adult with disabilities needs, the types of decisions that may be made, and when they may be put into place.

One alternative to legal guardianship is **power of attorney**. This document gives someone like a parent the power to act on behalf of an adult with disabilities, such as decisions for their finances or healthcare.

To learn more about guardianship and alternative options, read in the Appendix (p. 24).

## Family Story



*“In my case, I have a son who has disabilities that impact his life—he has limited ability to take care of his health or manage his own money. He can get into trouble without additional support or protection for him.*

*So by looking at my son who needs all these kinds of support, I decided that being his guardian, taking care of all those needs, was a good decision. As a guardian, I make decisions on behalf of my son for his own best benefit. All guardians have responsibility to report to the court.”*



## What kinds of decisions do I need help with?

Before exploring guardianship or the alternatives, it is important to know what kinds of decisions a youth with disabilities needs help. The worksheet below can help you identify some areas where assistance may be needed.

Is the person able to...? <sup>ii</sup>	Yes	Maybe	No
<b>Daily Life:</b> Spend time at home or in the community without risk of injury? Make decisions and communicate their choices to other people?			
<b>Health:</b> Take care of personal hygiene? Manage their medication/make decisions about medical treatment? Know when to eat and stay healthy?			
<b>Financial, Legal, and Physical Safety:</b> Manage their own money (e.g. pay bills on time)? Understand and consent to legal, medical, and financial documents or services? Protect against financial/sexual exploitation?			
<b>Social:</b> Interact appropriately with family, friends, co-workers and intimate partners? Understand appropriate intimate/sexual relationships?			
<b>Community Living:</b> Get to places safely outside of their home?			
<b>Citizenship:</b> Demonstrate the ability to vote? Understand the consequences of making decisions that result in committing a crime? Know when it is appropriate to share information with parents, family members, or friends who are not a legal guardian?			

(Adapted from <http://moguardianship.com> with a permission).

### Check:

- ☒ YES if a youth is able to do on their own or with limited help.
- ☒ MAYBE if a youth may be able to do with some support.
- ☒ NO if a youth requires a guardian or alternative to do on their behalf.

This worksheet may help parents or caregivers to balance protecting their child with letting their child keep as many of their rights as an adult as possible. Remember that this worksheet is only a tool!

Seek the advice of a legal professional when considering guardianship or alternatives.

## What are money management skills?



Money management skills include:

- Knowing the value of money
- Earning money
- Saving money
- Budgeting
- Spending money wisely

## Why are money management skills important?

Many youth with disabilities have had parents or caregivers to manage their money for them, and may not have had the opportunity to practice for themselves.<sup>iii</sup>

For youths, knowing how to earn, spend, and save money wisely is an important life skill for adults. Having a plan and using your money responsibly helps you to have control over your life, allowing you to pay for what you need and what you want. However, managing your money irresponsibly can lead to debts and other financial problems.

## How can families help youth with disabilities manage their money?<sup>1,2</sup>



*“My mom helps me practice how to shop smart by looking at the cost! I also have an app on my smartphone that is connected to my bank account. The app alerts me when I have less than \$100 in my account, so I know not to overspend.”*



*“Mickle prepares his money to ride a bus to work on his own. His family helped him practice counting quarters he will need and putting them into a pouch he takes to work. “*

<sup>1</sup> National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability “How Families can Help”: [www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/InfoBrief-42-Developing-Financial-Capability-Among-Youth-How-Families-Can-Help.pdf](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/InfoBrief-42-Developing-Financial-Capability-Among-Youth-How-Families-Can-Help.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Cents and Sensibility: A guide to money management for people with disabilities: <http://www.fliconline.org/documents/patffinancialeducationbooklet-final.pdf>

## Eligibility-based Financial Support for an Adults with Disabilities

Although many adults with disabilities receive income through work, often their paycheck cannot cover all of their monthly expenses. **Eligibility-based services** are services that you must apply and qualify for before receiving benefits. Below are some resources that may help adults with disabilities.

### Social Security Administration

The federal **Social Security Administration (SSA)** provides *cash assistance* to people with disabilities through **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** and **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**.



Although both programs are through SSA, they have different eligibility requirements and different benefits.<sup>iv</sup> To learn more about SSI and SSDI, refer to the Appendix section, page 16.

<b>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</b>	<b>Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SSI is need-based; you must have less than \$2000 in assets and very limited income, but there is no work requirement.</li><li>• To qualify for SSI, you must be blind, elderly, or have a disability.</li><li>• Once an SSI recipient turns 18, their parents' income does not count toward their benefit.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SSDI is a program that pays benefits to you if you become disabled before you reach retirement age.</li><li>• To qualify for SSDI, you must have worked a certain number of years in a job where you paid Social Security taxes.</li></ul>

## Myths about SSI/SSDI<sup>v</sup>

MYTH	FACT
I can't work because of my disability.	Often, with reasonable accommodations, you can be successful at many kinds of work!
I will lose my SSI/SSDI checks when I start to work.	Both SSI and SSDI have rules to protect your benefits so you can try working and not worry about losing your benefits. Learn more about <b>benefits counseling</b> (p. 29).
If I work, I will lose my health care benefits.	There are several ways you can keep your health care benefits when you start working.
If I start working, Social Security will decide I do not have a disability anymore.	Although they may review your case, SSA will not automatically stop your benefits just because you are working.
There are no resources that can help me find and keep a job.	There are many resources for persons with disabilities to find and keep a job! Review Section 3: Daily Life for some examples.
I can't afford the extra costs of starting to work.	There are programs available to help you with transportation or assistive technology costs.
I don't need my benefits as long as I have a job, but if I have to stop working I won't be able to get my benefits back.	Both SSI and SSDI have special rules that allow your benefits to be restarted without having to reapply for benefits.

## Youth & Family Stories

*"When I turned 18, my mom helped me apply for **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**. I still live with my family, but I'm paying rent with SSI benefits to practice and be ready to live on my own in the future. I also had **benefits counseling**<sup>3</sup> with a DVR counselor, which helped me find ways to keep my SSI benefits while I work!"*



*"Legally, SSI benefits are an asset for person with disabilities. So as my son's guardian, I'm responsible for ensuring that the SSI benefit is used to take care of my son, like for rent, food, and clothing. I'm also responsible for recording how the SSI benefit is spent, because the guardians are required to report to the court based on your guardianship renewal process. This report will be used by the judge to determine whether you are suitable to be a guardian to this person with a disability."*



<sup>3</sup> Learn more about benefits counseling in Appendix page 29.

## Special Needs Trusts <sup>vi vii</sup>

A trust is an arrangement where a **trustee** legally manages a **beneficiary's** property or money called “**trust.**” **Beneficiary** is a person with disability whom trust is established for and a **trustee** can be a person, bank or other entity.

There are two different types of Special Needs Trusts:

- Trust I: Third Party Settled Special Needs Trust
- Trust II: Self-Settled Special Needs Trusts

A Special Needs Trust lets beneficiaries save more than \$2,000 to use in the future without losing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid. It also provides a safety net to pay for services in case a person with a disability loses services due to budget cuts and policy changes.

You need to work with a lawyer or use **Washington State DD Endowment Trust Fund** to set up the trust. To learn more read Appendix page 22 or visit <http://ddetf.wa.gov/>.



## ABLE Act Account <sup>viii ix</sup>

In 2016, the State of Washington enacted the **Achieving Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act**, which will allow persons with disabilities and third parties to contribute to a savings account.

Earnings and withdrawals are tax-free as long as they are used for a qualifying disability expense. This is different from a special needs trust.

ABLE Act Accounts are self-directed, which means that they don't require a trustee or trust fund manager. Similar to a special needs trust, savings in an ABLE Act Account cannot be counted when determining eligibility for SSI and Medicaid as long as amount does not exceed certain amount.

To learn more about ABLE Act, read Appendix page 23 or visit: <http://www.ablenrc.org/>





## What is adolescent health care transition?<sup>x</sup>

**Adolescent health care transition** occurs when you are moving from pediatric care to adult health care. It means getting ready for your health care as an adult, whether you need to transfer from a pediatric to an adult primary care provider, who may be a family physician or nurse.

The transition period is a time for youth to take on increasing responsibility for their own health care based on their ability. This can include making appointments, filling out forms, keeping track of medicine, and getting refills. Youth may need a parent or guardian to help with these skills at first, but with practice, most youth can do this on their own!



## Why is adolescent health care transition important?

When youths turn 18, some youth may take on increasing responsibility to take care of their own health. This may include calling the doctor, making appointments, filling out forms, or accessing your medical records.

For young adults with disabilities who will continue to need significant parental support, exploring options such as **supported decision making**, **durable power of attorney**, or **partial legal guardianship** is necessary *before* the youth turns 18.

To learn more about these options, consult with your doctor or legal professionals, or read “[Turning 18: What it Means for Your Health](http://gottransition.org/)” at <http://gottransition.org/>.

There may also be transitions in financial coverage or other health care insurance. Read section on ‘Eligibility-Based Health Care Supports for Adults with Disabilities’ (page 14).

## How can families prepare for the transition to adult healthcare?



### Some preparation families can start may include:

- ☐ If working with pediatrician, identify primary care provider.
- ☐ List of all the clinics and departments where youths receive care.
- ☐ List of current healthcare specialist and any provider that needs to transfer to new specialist for adult youth.
- ☐ List of medical records that need to be transferred to new provider and how to transfer medical records.
- ☐ Any information that may not be part of the medical record, but is important for the new provider to know (e.g. a youth needs sedation for blood draws).
- ☐ Potential family member/caregiver for young adult is not independent.

### Planning for Emergencies

- ☐ Are there special considerations if young adult needs emergency care?
- ☐ What information will care teams need to best treat and support my young adult in case of an emergency?
- ➔ Young adults and families can create Medical Identification card or with free apps on [iPhone](#) and/or [Android](#).

## How can families help their youth prepare for adult healthcare?

Understanding and navigating health care can be confusing for young adults, especially if they have never done it before. Parents, caregivers, and other family members can help youth with disabilities learn skills they need to manage their own healthcare. It may help to start practicing when youths become a teenager.



Here are some examples<sup>xi</sup>:

- ☐ List name of medications with correct name.
- ☐ Learn when to take medications and why they take them.
  - Use technology to remind: [MyMedSchedule.com](http://MyMedSchedule.com)
- ☐ Learn what to do if youth forget to take medication(s).
- ☐ Practice talking to health care professionals or explaining to friends about their health condition and/or diagnosis in their own words
- ☐ Practice talking about what they have to do to stay healthy—eating healthy, activities, exercise, and more.
- ☐ Help them understand and practice what to do in case of an emergency.

For a more detailed checklist of health care-related skills, visit <https://cshcn.org/pdf/teen-healthcare-management-skills-checklist.pdf> or <http://www.gottransition.org/resourceGet.cfm?id=224>.

## Eligibility-Based Health Care Supports for Adults with Disabilities

**Medicaid** is a health insurance program funded by state and federal governments.<sup>xii</sup> Medicaid gives access to various healthcare services for free or at a low cost to those who are eligible.

Once a youth turns 18, they will be considered their own household and can apply to Medicaid as an individual.

### Important information about Medicaid

1. Applying for Medicaid may help a youth get insurance coverage.
2. Medicaid eligibility is different by a number of individual programs.
3. If you are a non-U.S. citizen, there are additional eligibility requirements.
4. You can call WithinReach (1-800-322-2588) or visit <https://parenthelp123.org/benefit-finder> for assistance with Medicaid eligibility and application information.
5. There are ways to keep Medicaid while working!  
➔ Learn more about **Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD)** on Appendix page (page F).



(Source: WithinReachWA.org)

## RESOURCES

### Adolescent Transition

- Age of Majority Parent Guide: <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/age-of-majority-parentguide/>

### Legal Assistance / Guardianship

- The Arc of Washington's guardianship page: <http://arcwa.org/library/guardianship>
- Northwest Justice Project (NJP): <https://nwjustice.org/>
- Washington State Bar Associations: <http://www.wsba.org/Legal-Community/County-Bar-Associations>
- Washington Law Help: <https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/>

### Money Management

- ABLE Act Account: <http://www.ablenrc.org/about/what-are-able-accounts>
- Cents and Sensibility: A guide to money management for people with disabilities: <http://www.fliconline.org/documents/patffinancialeducationbooklet-final.pdf>
- Plan to Work: [www.plantowork.org](http://www.plantowork.org)
- Plan for Work: <https://droregon.org/topics/plan-for-work/>
- Social Security Administration: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- Washington State DD Endowment Trust Fund: <http://ddetf.wa.gov>

### Healthcare

- Got Transition: <http://www.gottransition.org>
- PAVE: Family to Family Health Information Center
  - <http://wapave.org/programs/family-family-health-information-center/>
- Seattle Children's Center for Children with Special Needs: <http://www.cshcn.org>
- Washington Connection: <https://www.washingtonconnection.org/>
- Within Reach: <http://www.withinreachwa.org/>

### Community Organizations

- The Arc: Find a local chapter at [http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local\\_arc\\_chapters](http://arcwa.org/aboutus/local_arc_chapters)
- Independent Living Center: Find a local chapter at <http://www.wasilc.org/> under the "IL center" tab
- Open Doors for Multicultural Families: <http://www.multiculturalfamilies.org>
- Washington PAVE: <http://wapave.org/>





## ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES

### What are Social Security Benefits?<sup>4</sup>

The federal **Social Security Administration (SSA)** provides **cash assistance** to people with disabilities through two programs:

- I. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and;
- II. Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

For more information on SSDI and SSI, please take a look at Table 1: Comparison of the SSDI and SSI and Table 2: Social Security Work Incentives.

### Important Information to Know about Social Security benefits

1. Once a youth turns 18, their parents' income does not count toward their benefits. Youths who are age 18 can apply for SSI as individual.
2. Apply for Social Security benefits BEFORE youth turns age 18. The process takes between three and five months, or longer.
  - a. Apply online at: [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or;
  - b. Call 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment at your local Social Security office or to set up a phone appointment.
3. SSA has strict eligibility criteria by disability condition.
4. If you are a non-U.S. citizen, you must have a certain immigration status or become a citizen in order to receive benefits through SSA.
5. If you want to work, there are ways to keep Social Security benefits while working through **benefits planning** (see page. 9).
6. SSA provides a language interpreter free of charge. Learn more at: [www.ssa.gov/multilanguage/langlist1.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/multilanguage/langlist1.htm)
7. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, SSA also provides a toll-free TTY number: 1-800-325-0078 between 7am and 7pm on business days.

**To find your local Social Security office, visit:**

<https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>

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<sup>4 4</sup> Adapted from [Planning My Way to Work](#). Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities with a permission



## ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES

**Table 1. Comparison of the SSDI and SSI disability programs<sup>5</sup>**

	SSDI	SSI
<b>Minimum Requirements</b>	<p>Must meet SSA's disability criteria</p> <p>You or a parent worked long enough to pay Social Security Taxes</p>	<p>Must meet SSA's disability criteria</p> <p>Must have limited income and resources (less than \$2,000)</p>
<b>Health Insurance Coverage</b>	Medicare	<p>Medicaid</p> <p>WA state: Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD)</p>
<b>Monthly Payment Amount</b>	<p>Your SSDI monthly payment is based on the worker's lifetime average earnings covered by Social Security</p> <p>This amount changes annually to account for cost-of-living changes</p>	<p>Your SSI monthly payment is based on the Federal Benefit Rate (FBR) that changes every year</p> <p>Your payment equals the FBR minus your income, plus the state supplement (if any)</p> <p>The state supplement is a small payment that increases the amount of your benefit</p>
<b>State Supplement</b>	None	Washington's supplement amount varies

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from [Planning My Way to Work](#). Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities with a permission



## ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES

**Table 2. Social Security work incentive programs<sup>6</sup>**

	Title II SSDI	Title XVI SSI
<b>General Work Rule</b>	Benefit check is all or nothing. It is based on whether countable earnings are above or below substantial gainful activity (SGA), \$1,090/month in 2015 (\$1,820 for person who is blind)	Benefit check is reduced \$1 for every \$2 of earned income after the first \$85/month (if there is unearned income after the first \$65/month).
<b>Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)</b>	Out-of-pocket, impairment-related expenses needed to work are deducted from gross earnings to determine countable earnings for SGA.	Out-of-pocket, impairment-related expenses needed to work are deducted from earned income when calculating the SSI check amount.
<b>Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS plan)</b>	Title II beneficiaries can use this SSI work incentive if they can meet SSI eligibility criteria after PASS excludes Title II income.	Under an approved plan, a person sets aside income for a specified time to reach a work goal. Income and resource set aside under a PASS are excluded when calculating the SSI check amount and must be used to purchase work-related items/services.
<b>Additional Work Incentives</b>	Subsidy/special conditions: Support received on the job that results in receiving more pay than the value of the services performed. Only the portion of the pay that reflects the value of the work actually performed is included in calculating countable earnings for the SGA test.	<b>Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS):</b> Resources essential to self-support are not counted in the resource test. These resources include property used in business or used for work as an employee. <b>Student earned income exclusion (SEIE):</b> If the person is under 22 years of age and regularly attending school, the first \$7,180/year (2015) of earned income is excluded when calculating the SSI check amount. Maximum of \$1,780/month (2015).

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from [Planning My Way to Work](#). Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities with a permission



## ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES

### What is Benefits Planning?<sup>7</sup>

Benefits planning is for anyone who wants to work and is receiving cash, medical, housing, food benefits and/or personal care services. A benefits counselor will help individuals understand the impact of work on their benefits and how to use work incentive programs.

### Important Information about Benefits Counseling

1. Many people think that they cannot receive disability benefits if they work, but this is not true. People with disabilities can earn income from work and keep their benefits through a work incentive program.
2. To be eligible for these programs, you must be:
  - a. Receiving a SSI and/or SSDI
  - b. Between 14 years old and retirement age and
  - c. Considering employment or employed.
3. Benefits planning helps to:
  - a. Understand how benefits will be impacted by work,
  - b. Allow you to work as much as possible without worrying about keeping benefits,
  - c. Learn about Social Security work incentives and other programs help for items and services you need to keep your job, and
  - d. Find out about healthcare options that match your needs.
4. Calculate how income impacts your benefits at:  
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/ssi-grant-calculation-earned-income>

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<sup>7</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. *Benefits planning*.  
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/division-vocational-rehabilitation/benefits-planning>



## ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES

### Where do I get support for Benefits Planning?

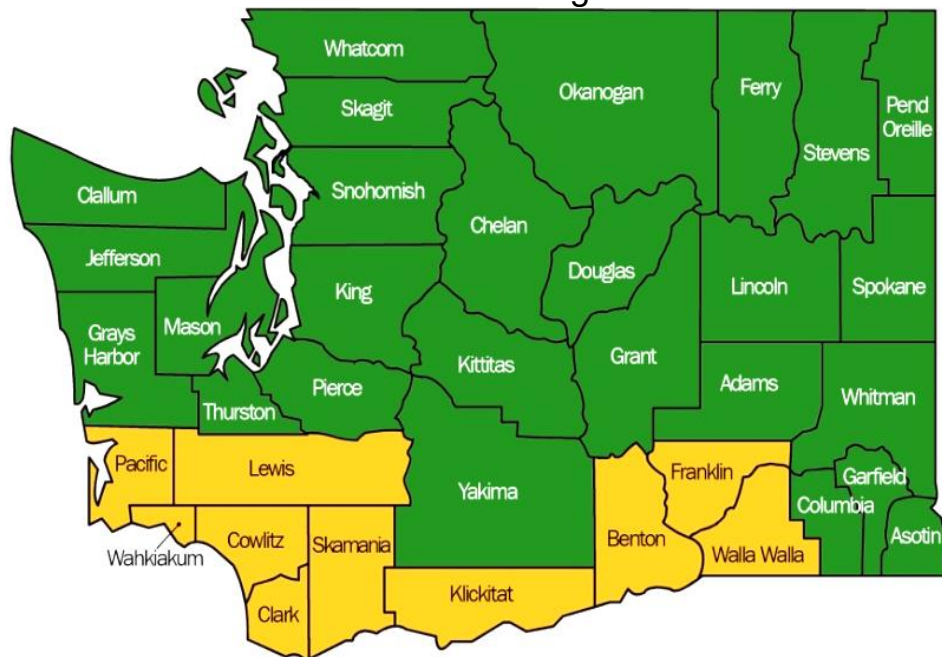
If you are a client of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), you can request benefit planning services.

Washington State also has two statewide benefits counseling programs: **Plan to Work** and **Plan for Work**.

- Both programs are free to eligible participants
- Both programs offer the same services and are available across the state.
- You can access services in-person or by phone.

This map shows:

- **Plan to Work's** service area in green
- **Plan for Work's** service area in orange



(Source: <http://community-minded.org/plan-to-work>)

To enroll with **Plan to Work**, call 866-497-9443, go to [www.plantowork.org](http://www.plantowork.org).

To make an appointment with **Plan for Work**, email [pfw@DROregon.org](mailto:pfw@DROregon.org) or call 1-800-452-1694, x 227 (toll-free) or 503-243-2081.

\*Leave a voicemail with your name, contact information and interest in benefits planning.





## ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES

### What is Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) Program?<sup>8</sup>

Through the **Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) Program**, workers with disabilities can purchase medical coverage with a monthly fee that is adjusted by their income.

HWD provides access to Medicaid Personal Care services and Home and Community Based waiver programs by Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and Home and Community Services (HCS).

### Important Information about HWD<sup>9</sup>

1. Eligibility requirements include:
  - a. Be age 16 through 64
  - b. Meet federal disability requirements (same as SSA)
  - c. Be employed full or part-time (including self-employment) and
  - d. Have monthly income that does not exceed 220% of the federal poverty level.
2. HWD is affordable. The price is adjusted by your income (no more than 7.5% of total monthly income).
3. To apply, go to: [www.washingtonconnections.org](http://www.washingtonconnections.org).
4. A person who is receiving another Medicaid program may choose not to participate in HWD program.
5. A person is NOT eligible for the HWD coverage for a month person received Medicaid benefits under the Medically Needy Program.

### Remember:

If you receive disability benefits and want to work, contact Plan to Work or Plan for Work. These programs can help you earn income and keep your benefits.

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<sup>8</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. *Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD)*. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/apple-health-workers-disabilities-hwd-program>

<sup>9</sup> WAC 182-511-1000 HWD program description, June 25, 2015



## FINANCIAL SECURITY

### What is Washington State DD Endowment Trust Fund?<sup>10</sup>

As a managed trust, the **Washington State DD Endowment Trust Fund** enables families to open either Self-Settled or Third Party Settled special needs trusts at a minimal cost. Individuals need to meet three conditions at the time of enrollment in the program:

1. Reside in the State of Washington,
2. Meet the state definition of “developmental disability” by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), and
3. Be under the age of 65.

Learn more about **WA DD Endowment Trust Fund** at: **1-888-754-8798** or <http://ddetf.wa.gov/>

### Important Information to know about DD Endowment Trust Fund

1. Individuals need to meet three conditions at the time of enrollment:
  - a. Reside in the State of Washington.
  - b. Meet the state definition of developmental disability by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).
  - c. Be under the age of 65
2. A DD Endowment Trust lets beneficiaries save more than \$2,000 to use in the future without losing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid,
3. DD Endowment Trust enable families to open a special needs trust at a minimal cost.
4. Provides a safety net to pay for services in case a person with disabilities loses services due to budget cuts and policy changes.

**WA DD Endowment Trust: 1-888-754-8798** or [www.ddlot.org](http://www.ddlot.org)

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<sup>10</sup> WA DD Endowment Trust Fund: <http://ddetf.wa.gov/>



## FINANCIAL SECURITY

### Important Information about ABLE Account<sup>11</sup>

1. Individuals need to meet the following eligibility criteria:
  - a. Have a significant disability with onset before turning *age 26*.
    - i. Individuals who receive SSI and/or SSDI benefits are eligible to establish an ABLE account as long as they meet age criteria.
    - ii. Eligible individuals do not need to be under the age of 26 to open an ABLE account.
2. Individuals with disabilities and family can contribute up to an ABLE account up to \$14,000 in a single tax year.
3. When an ABLE account exceeds \$100,000, the beneficiary's SSI cash benefit will be suspended until the account falls below \$100,000.
4. An ABLE account can be used for "a qualified disability expense." Learn more at: <http://www.ablenrc.org/about/what-are-able-accounts>
5. Washington State does not have active program as of 2017. However, individuals and families can open an account using other states' programs.
  - a. Oregon ABLE Savings Plan: <http://oregonablesavings.com>
  - b. For up-to-date information, visit Informing Families: <http://informingfamilies.org/etf-able/>

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<sup>11</sup> ABLE National Resources Center: <http://www.ablenrc.org/about/what-are-able-accounts>



## LEGAL SECURITY

### What is Guardianship?

**A guardianship** is a legal process where a court decides an adult person with disability is “incapacitated” to make a decision about some or all aspects of their life and appoints a **guardian**. **Guardian** is a person who will make decisions on behalf of incapacitated person.

### Important Information about Guardianship:<sup>12</sup>

1. Guardianship should be the last options to consider
  - a. **Incapacitated** means that person has significant risk with taking care of their medical needs, nutrition, physical safety, living condition, or managing personal finances or property.
  - b. Depending on an adult person’s support needs, alternative options to guardianship may be appropriate.
  - c. To learn more about the alternative options, visit Washington Law Help and search [Alternatives to Guardianship for Adults](#).
2. A guardian can be a family member, a friend, or any individual or agency who will be appointed by the court.
3. A person who wants to become a guardian must complete [guardianship training](#)<sup>13</sup>. Check in with your county court!
4. All guardians have to be approved by the court, and the decision-making responsibilities will depend on how much support the adult person needs to make appropriate decisions <sup>14</sup>
5. Laws on guardianship can vary from the county to county or state to state. Check in with your county court!<sup>15</sup>
6. To find pro bono or low-cost attorney, visit <https://waweblawyer.org/> and click “Help.”
  - a. To get legal help in different languages: **Northwest Justice Project: 1-888-201-1014** or <https://nwjustice.org/get-legal-help>
7. Self-represented party can have [the courthouse facilitator](#) check your completed guardianship paperwork with a fee. However, the court facilitators DOES NOT provide legal advice.
8. Request an interpreter at the court as soon as you have hearing date scheduled.

<sup>12</sup> Vinning (2012). *Alternatives to Guardianship for Adults*. [www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/alternatives-to-guardianships-for-adults](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/alternatives-to-guardianships-for-adults)

<sup>13</sup> RCW 11.88.020

<sup>14</sup> The Arc of Washington (2007). *What is Guardianship?* <http://arcwa.org/library/guardianship>

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.disabilityrightswa.org/supported-decision-making-empowering-choice>

<sup>ii</sup> Adapted from “Identifying Alternatives to Guardianship” from MO Guardianship. Full tool available here:  
<http://www.moguardianship.com/Alternatives%20to%20Guardianship%20Tool%20Revised%2011-2015.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://arcuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Helping-young-people-with-learning-disabilities-to-understand-money.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.disabilitysecrets.com/page5-13.html>

<sup>v</sup> <https://ca.db101.org/ca/situations/workandbenefits/myths/article.htm>

<sup>vi</sup> [http://arcwa.org/library/whats\\_next#special](http://arcwa.org/library/whats_next#special)

<sup>vii</sup> <http://estate.findlaw.com/trusts/special-needs-trusts-faq-s.html>

<sup>viii</sup> <http://www.ablenrc.org/news/able-act-now-law-washington>

<sup>ix</sup> <http://informingfamilies.org/able-on-the-way/>

<sup>x</sup> <http://www.gottransition.org/youthfamilies/>

<sup>xi</sup> [https://www.uab.edu/civitansparks/images/Going\\_from\\_Teen\\_to\\_Tween.pdf](https://www.uab.edu/civitansparks/images/Going_from_Teen_to_Tween.pdf)

<sup>xii</sup> <https://medicaid-help.org/>



# APPENDIX



## LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

A Guide for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families of  
Youth with Disabilities

Important Information for  
Adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities

OPEN DOORS FOR MULTICULTURAL FAMILIES  
[www.multiculturalfamilies.org](http://www.multiculturalfamilies.org)

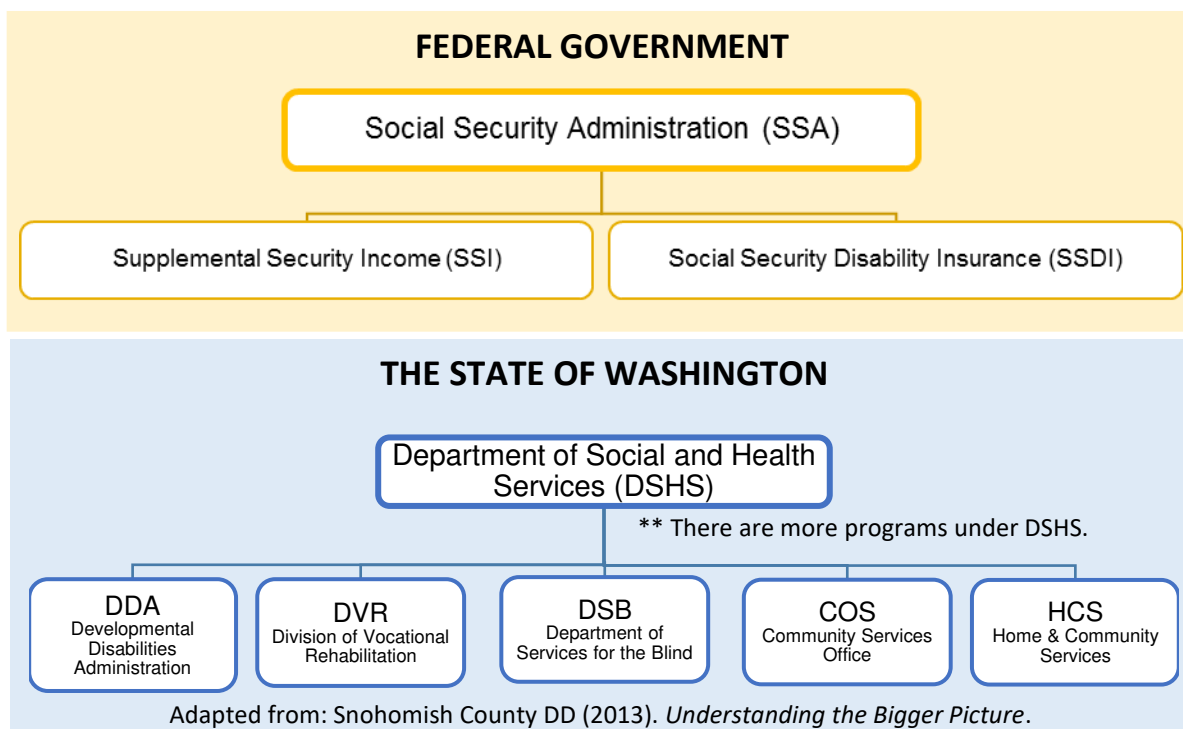


# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What are Eligibility-based Services?

**Eligibility-based services** are services that you need to apply and qualify for in order to receive the services. Many eligibility-based services for adults with disabilities are available from federal government (e.g. Social Security Administration), or State's different departments under the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) in Washington State.



## KEY TO SUCCESS

Start learning about adult services early.

Each adult service agencies have its own application and eligibility requirements. To be successful with your transition to life after high school, be familiar with:

- Types of services provided under each program
- Eligibility criteria (or qualifications); and
- Documents needed to apply

## Need Help?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Family Support Specialist.  
Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What is Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)?<sup>1</sup>

**Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)** serves a person with developmental and intellectual disabilities (DD/ID) and their families. The goal of DDA is to support a person with DD/ID to live the life they want with a network of community-based supports & services.

An individual with DD/ID can apply to DDA at any age, but NOT all individuals with DD/ID will be eligible for DDA or services.



To apply for DDA services in WA, an individual must:

- ☑ Be a WA state resident
  - ☑ Have a documented condition that qualifies for DDA **before** age 18.
- Visit [www.dshs.wa.gov/dda](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda) and click on [Eligibility](#)

## Important Information to know about DDA

1. You can apply to DDA at any age, but it is **highly recommended before you leave high school.**
2. If you are denied eligibility, you can either request a fair hearing.
3. Reapply for eligibility if you have new diagnostic information or IQ testing that DDA did not review for your previous determination.
4. Getting a DDA eligibility notice does NOT mean you will get services automatically. DDA's service is provided based on individuals' needs and funding. Call DDA office for a "needs-based assessment"
5. Some DDA services available through DDA depend on **age**, **available funding**, and whether an individual qualifies for **Medicaid**.
6. DDA eligibility expires at ages 4 and 10. Eligibility is reviewed at age 19 for most clients. You will receive notices in the mail with further instructions if child's eligibility is expiring or being reviewed.
7. DDA provides an interpreter free of charge.

**\*\***Make sure to inform DDA office if your contact information change.

[www.informingfamilies.org](http://www.informingfamilies.org) website has more detailed information about [Applying to DDA services in WA](#), [Roadmap to waiver services](#), and [DDA Waiver services](#).

<sup>1</sup> Developmental Disabilities Administration. *What we do*. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda>





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## Why is applying to Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Important?

For individuals requiring long-term support, applying for DDA services is especially important because:

- DDA can provide supports in your home, at work, and in the community
- DDA can provide long term employment support
- DDA can support an individual's ongoing medical and behavioral support needs



DDA emphasizes Person-Centered-Planning to build a support based on preferences, needs, and strengths.

If you need help with understanding DDA programs & services, contact your local DDA office: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/DDA/dda/find-an-office>

**\*\*** DDA has brochures about different services, many of them translated into: Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. See: [www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/publications/dda-brochures](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/publications/dda-brochures)

### Need help navigating services in your own language?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Bilingual Family Support Specialist.  
Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)



"This project is supported through funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policy or reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Education".



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)?

**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** helps individuals with disabilities who want to work but experience challenges with finding and keeping a job.

In order to receive services from DVR, an individual needs to apply and qualify for them.



To apply for DVR services in WA, an individual must:

- ☑ Be a U.S. citizen or have a valid Employment Authorization Document.
- ☑ Have a documented condition that qualifies for DVR

Visit [www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr) for more information.

Once an individual is eligible for DVR, DVR provides services such as:



Counseling and guidance



Assessment



Benefits planning



Job-related services



Assistive technology services



Independent living services



Training and education

Learn more about DVR services at: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/division-vocational-rehabilitation/services-individuals-disabilities>



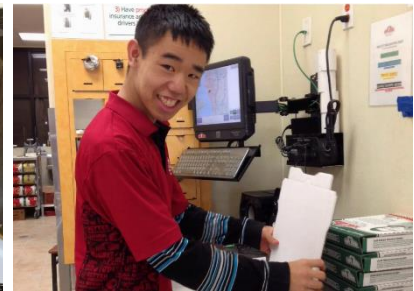


# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## Important Information to Know about DVR

1. Individuals must be a US citizen or have a valid work permit (Green card) in order to receive DVR services.
2. DVR support is short-term (up to 90 days after gaining employment). Support ends after the counselor ensures that the individual can keep their job.
3. Individuals who require ongoing support to keep a job must become a client of DDA and Medicaid, and qualify for **supported employment** services (see section on DDA services).
4. Many people start by receiving support through DVR to get a job.
5. DVR provides a language interpreter free of charge.



Contact a DVR office near you, or the DVR counselor assigned to your school at: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/RA/dvr/school-transition>.

For Information about the Washington State Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, visit [www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr) and click on [Tribal VR Programs](#).

### Need help navigating services in your own language?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Bilingual Family Support Specialist.

Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)



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# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What is Benefits Planning?<sup>2</sup>

Benefits planning is for anyone who wants to work and is receiving cash, medical, housing, food benefits and/or personal care services. A benefits counselor will help individuals understand the impact of work on their benefits and how to use work incentive programs.

## Important Information about Benefits Counseling

1. Many people think that they cannot receive disability benefits if they work, but this is not true. People with disabilities can earn income from work and keep their benefits through a work incentive program.
2. To be eligible for these programs, you must be:
  - a. Receiving a SSI and/or SSDI
  - b. Between 14 years old and retirement age and
  - c. Considering employment or employed.
3. Benefits planning helps to:
  - a. Understand how benefits will be impacted by work,
  - b. Allow you to work as much as possible without worrying about keeping benefits,
  - c. Learn about Social Security work incentives and other programs help for items and services you need to keep your job, and
  - d. Find out about healthcare options that match your needs.
4. Calculate how income impacts your benefits at:  
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/ssi-grant-calculation-earned-income>

### Need help navigating services in your own language?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Bilingual Family Support Specialist.

Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)

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<sup>2</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. *Benefits planning*.  
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/division-vocational-rehabilitation/benefits-planning>





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## Where do I get support for Benefits Planning?

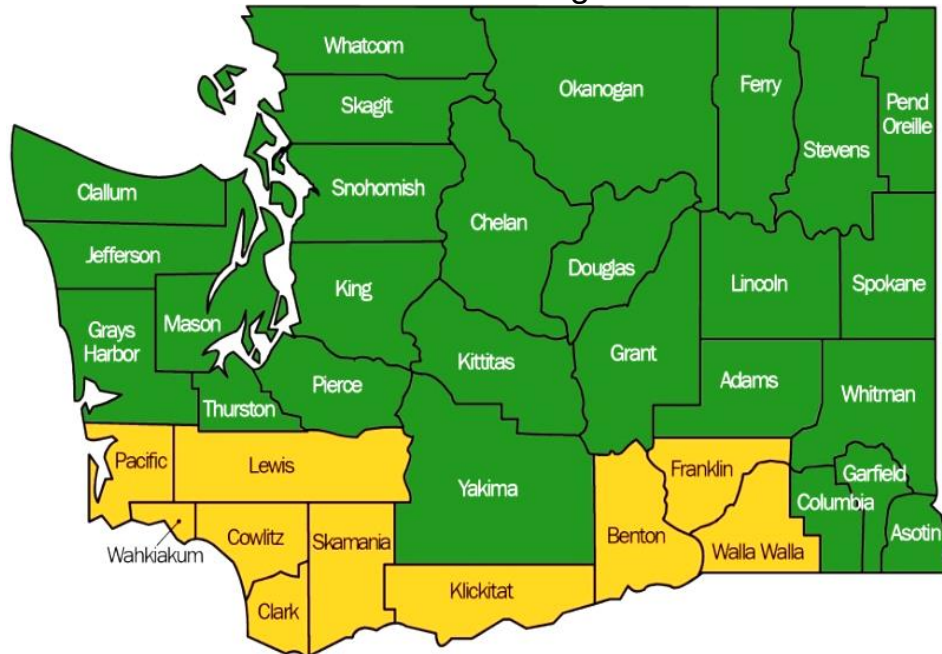
If you are a client of Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), you can request benefit planning services.

Washington State also has two statewide benefits counseling programs: **Plan to Work** and **Plan for Work**.

- Both programs are free to eligible participants
- Both programs offer the same services and are available across the state.
- You can access services in-person or by phone.

This map shows:

- **Plan to Work's** service area in green
- **Plan for Work's** service area in orange



(Source: <http://community-minded.org/plan-to-work>)

To enroll with **Plan to Work**, call 866-497-9443, go to [www.plantowork.org](http://www.plantowork.org).

To make an appointment with **Plan for Work**, email [pfw@DROregon.org](mailto:pfw@DROregon.org) or call 1-800-452-1694, x 227 (toll-free) or 503-243-2081.

\*Leave a voicemail with your name, contact information and interest in benefits planning.





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What is Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) Program?<sup>3</sup>

Through the **Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) Program**, workers with disabilities can purchase medical coverage with a monthly fee that is adjusted by their income.

HWD provides access to Medicaid Personal Care services and Home and Community Based waiver programs by Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and Home and Community Services (HCS).

## Important Information about HWD<sup>4</sup>

1. Eligibility requirements include:
  - a. Be age 16 through 64
  - b. Meet federal disability requirements (same as SSA)
  - c. Be employed full or part-time (including self-employment) and
  - d. Have monthly income that does not exceed 220% of the federal poverty level.
2. HWD is affordable. The price is adjusted by your income (no more than 7.5% of total monthly income).
3. To apply, go to: [www.washingtonconnections.org](http://www.washingtonconnections.org).
4. A person who is receiving another Medicaid program may choose not to participate in HWD program.
5. A person is NOT eligible for the HWD coverage for a month person received Medicaid benefits under the Medically Needy Program.

## Remember:

If you receive disability benefits and want to work, contact Plan to Work or Plan for Work. These programs can help you earn income and keep your benefits.

## Need help navigating services in your own language?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Bilingual Family Support Specialist.  
Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)

<sup>3</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. *Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD)*.  
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/apple-health-workers-disabilities-hwd-program>

<sup>4</sup> WAC 182-511-1000 HWD program description, June 25, 2015





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

## What are Social Security Benefits?<sup>5</sup>

The federal **Social Security Administration (SSA)** provides **cash assistance** to people with disabilities through two programs:

- I. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and;
- II. Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

For more information on SSDI and SSI, please take a look at Table 1: Comparison of the SSDI and SSI and Table 2: Social Security Work Incentives.

## Important Information to Know about Social Security benefits

1. Apply for Social Security benefits BEFORE you turn age 18. The process takes between three and five months, or longer.
  - a. Apply online at: [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or;
  - b. Call 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment at your local Social Security office or to set up a phone appointment.
2. SSA has strict eligibility criteria by disability condition.
3. If you are a non-U.S. citizen, you must have a certain immigration status or become a citizen in order to receive benefits through SSA.
4. If you want to work, there are ways to keep Social Security benefits while working through **benefits planning** (see page. 9).
5. SSA provides a language interpreter free of charge. Learn more at: [www.ssa.gov/multilanguage/langlist1.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/multilanguage/langlist1.htm)
6. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, SSA also provides a toll-free TTY number: 1-800-325-0078 between 7am and 7pm on business days.

**To find your local Social Security office, visit:**

<https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>



## Need help navigating services in your own language?

Contact Open Doors for Multicultural Families to speak with Bilingual Family Support Specialist.

Office: 253-216-4479 | [info@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:info@multiculturalfamilies.org)

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from [Planning My Way to Work](#). Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities with a permission





# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

**Table 1. Comparison of the SSDI and SSI disability programs<sup>6</sup>**

	<b>SSDI</b>	<b>SSI</b>
<b>Minimum Requirements</b>	Must meet SSA's disability criteria You or a parent worked long enough to pay Social Security Taxes	Must meet SSA's disability criteria Must have limited income and resources
<b>Health Insurance Coverage</b>	Medicare	Medicaid WA state: Apple Health for Workers with Disabilities (HWD)
<b>Monthly Payment Amount</b>	Your SSDI monthly payment is based on the worker's lifetime average earnings covered by Social Security This amount changes annually to account for cost-of-living changes	Your SSI monthly payment is based on the Federal Benefit Rate (FBR) that changes every year Your payment equals the FBR minus your income, plus the state supplement (if any) The state supplement is a small payment that increases the amount of your benefit
<b>State Supplement</b>	None	Washington's supplement amount varies

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from [Planning My Way to Work](#). Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities with a permission



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

ELIGIBILITY-BASED SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

**Table 2. Social Security work incentive programs<sup>7</sup>**

	<b>Title II SSDI</b>	<b>Title XVI SSI</b>
<b>General Work Rule</b>	Benefit check is all or nothing. It is based on whether countable earnings are above or below substantial gainful activity (SGA), \$1,090/month in 2015 (\$1,820 for person who is blind)	Benefit check is reduced \$1 for every \$2 of earned income after the first \$85/month (if there is unearned income after the first \$65/month).
<b>Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)</b>	Out-of-pocket, impairment-related expenses needed to work are deducted from gross earnings to determine countable earnings for SGA.	Out-of-pocket, impairment-related expenses needed to work are deducted from earned income when calculating the SSI check amount.
<b>Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS plan)</b>	Title II beneficiaries can use this SSI work incentive if they can meet SSI eligibility criteria after PASS excludes Title II income.	Under an approved plan, a person sets aside income for a specified time to reach a work goal. Income and resource set aside under a PASS are excluded when calculating the SSI check amount and must be used to purchase work-related items/services.
<b>Additional Work Incentives</b>	Subsidy/special conditions: Support received on the job that results in receiving more pay than the value of the services performed. Only the portion of the pay that reflects the value of the work actually performed is included in calculating countable earnings for the SGA test.	<b>Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS):</b> Resources essential to self-support are not counted in the resource test. These resources include property used in business or used for work as an employee. <b>Student earned income exclusion (SEIE):</b> If the person is under 22 years of age and regularly attending school, the first \$7,180/year (2015) of earned income is excluded when calculating the SSI check amount. Maximum of \$1,780/month (2015).

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from [Planning My Way to Work](#). Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities with a permission



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES OVER AGE 18

## What is Guardianship?

**A guardianship** is a legal process where a court decides an adult person with disability is “incapacitated” to make a decision about some or all aspects of their life and appoints a **guardian**. **Guardian** is a person who will make decisions on behalf of incapacitated person.

## Important Information about Guardianship:<sup>8</sup>

1. Guardianship should be the last options to consider
  - a. **Incapacitated** means that person has significant risk with taking care of their medical needs, nutrition, physical safety, living condition, or managing personal finances or property.
  - b. Depending on an adult person’s support needs, alternative options to guardianship may be appropriate.
  - c. To learn more about the alternative options, visit Washington Law Help and search [Alternatives to Guardianship for Adults](#).
2. A guardian can be a family member, a friend, or any individual or agency who will be appointed by the court.
3. A person who wants to become a guardian must complete [guardianship training](#)<sup>9</sup>. Check in with your county court!
4. All guardians have to be approved by the court, and the decision-making responsibilities will depend on how much support the adult person needs to make appropriate decisions <sup>10</sup>
5. Laws on guardianship can vary from the county to county or state to state. Check in with your county court!<sup>11</sup>
6. To find pro bono or low-cost attorney, visit <https://waweblawyer.org/> and click “Help.”
  - a. To get legal help in different languages: **Northwest Justice Project: 1-888-201-1014** or <https://nwjustice.org/get-legal-help>
7. Self-represented party can have [the courthouse facilitator](#) check your completed guardianship paperwork with a fee. However, the court facilitators DOES NOT provide legal advice.
8. Request an interpreter at the court as soon as you have hearing date scheduled.

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<sup>8</sup> Vinning (2012). *Alternatives to Guardianship for Adults*. [www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/alternatives-to-guardianships-for-adults](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/alternatives-to-guardianships-for-adults)

<sup>9</sup> RCW 11.88.020

<sup>10</sup> The Arc of Washington (2007). *What is Guardianship?* <http://arcwa.org/library/guardianship>



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES OVER AGE 18

## What is Washington State DD Endowment Trust Fund?<sup>12</sup>

As a managed trust, the **Washington State DD Endowment Trust Fund** enables families to open either Self-Settled or Third Party Settled special needs trusts at a minimal cost. Individuals need to meet three conditions at the time of enrollment in the program:

1. Reside in the State of Washington,
2. Meet the state definition of “developmental disability” by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), and
3. Be under the age of 65.

Learn more about **WA DD Endowment Trust Fund** at: **1-888-754-8798** or <http://ddetf.wa.gov/>

## Important Information to know about DD Endowment Trust Fund

1. Individuals need to meet three conditions at the time of enrollment:
  - a. Reside in the State of Washington.
  - b. Meet the state definition of developmental disability by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).
  - c. Be under the age of 65
2. A DD Endowment Trust lets beneficiaries save more than \$2,000 to use in the future without losing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid,
3. DD Endowment Trust enable families to open a special needs trust at a minimal cost.
4. Provides a safety net to pay for services in case a person with disabilities loses services due to budget cuts and policy changes.

**WA DD Endowment Trust: 1-888-754-8798** or [www.ddlot.org](http://www.ddlot.org)

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<sup>12</sup> WA DD Endowment Trust Fund: <http://ddetf.wa.gov/>



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES OVER AGE 18

## Important Information about ABLE Account<sup>13</sup>

1. Individuals need to meet the following eligibility criteria:
  - a. Have a significant disability with onset before turning *age 26*.
    - i. Individuals who receive SSI and/or SSDI benefits are eligible to establish an ABLE account as long as they meet age criteria.
    - ii. Eligible individuals do not need to be under the age of 26 to open an ABLE account.
2. Individuals with disabilities and family can contribute up to an ABLE account up to \$14,000 in a single tax year.
3. When an ABLE account exceeds \$100,000, the beneficiary's SSI cash benefit will be suspended until the account falls below \$100,000.
4. An ABLE account can be used for "a qualified disability expense."  
Learn more at: <http://www.ablenrc.org/about/what-are-able-accounts>
5. Washington State does not have active program as of 2017.  
However, individuals and families can open an account using other states' programs.
  - a. Oregon ABLE Savings Plan: <http://oregonablesavings.com>
  - b. For up-to-date information, visit Informing Families:  
<http://informingfamilies.org/etf-able/>

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<sup>13</sup> ABLE National Resources Center: <http://www.ablenrc.org/about/what-are-able-accounts>