

# Planning My Way to Work

A transition guide for students with disabilities leaving high school







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# Dear Students and Families,

## Welcome to the transition from school to work!

Today's youth have high expectations for their adult lives. They want to live, work, go to college and play in their communities alongside their friends, neighbors and family members.

This manual is for you — a youth with disabilities who may be eligible to receive Developmental Disability (DD) or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services (see sections 6 and 7). If you are eligible, you may request additional supports to help you achieve your work goals. This manual includes important information to help you reach your dreams and goals and to plan for work and a career.

“Transition” is a process of moving from one place to the next. Like any transition process, careful planning is required to get where you want to go. The transition process supports you to make the move from school to work, additional education or a combination of the two. You direct your own journey with help from your family and your transition planning team.

Your transition planning team includes a group of people that will help you connect your school activities to work, college and other resources based on your career interests, dreams and goals. Your team includes the following:

- **You and your family** are the most important members of the team. Together, you direct the process based on your interests and dreams for the future.
- **Teachers and transition staff from your school district** help you implement your transition plan and make sure your school activities include the right mix of education, community and work experiences to help you reach your goals.
- **A service coordinator from your community developmental disability program (CDDP) or a personal agent from a support services brokerage** helps you connect to Developmental Disability (DD) services if you are eligible.
- **A Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor** connects you to services and resources to help you reach your work goals.
- **Others that can help** (i.e., social worker, mental health caseworker, etc.) contribute information and resources to help you reach your goals.

### This manual is intended to:

- Help you make your way through the transition process;
- Understand your rights, services and resources that may help you and your family;
- Provide information to help you understand complex adult service systems;
- Highlight that you direct your own transition;
- Reinforce that you and your team design your transition just for you; and
- Identify your work and other adult life goals and a plan to achieve those goals.

**Transition is work... but your team is there to help! We wish you great success in your transition from school to work and adult life.**



# Introduction

You are likely excited about your future career and adult life after high school. You may have questions about the services, supports<sup>1</sup> and resources that can help you reach your goals.

Each section of this manual has information to answer these questions. Your teachers and school staff will also help you sort out options.

The transition process supports you as you move from school to work, additional education or both. Transition involves you, your family, your school district and others.

During the transition process, you will carefully plan what you want your life to be like. Your parents, family and other people important to you will help you. We developed this guide to:

- Help you understand services and resources that can help you successfully transition from school to work and adult life;
- Emphasize that you direct your own transition; and
- Create your transition plan with your education and work goals in mind.

## Emphasis on employment

This guide focuses on the transition from school to “integrated competitive employment.” Having a job in the general work force helps you avoid poverty, earn an income and participate in your community. Transitioning directly from school to work is especially critical for students with disabilities that typically face barriers to employment.

Access to employment has long been a civil rights issue for people with disabilities. Other issues include:

- Low education and employment expectations for youth with disabilities;
- Misperceptions about people with disabilities; and
- Risk of being separated in day programs or sheltered workshops where people with disabilities earn less than minimum wage.

“Planning My Way to Work” addresses these issues by preparing you for the general work force and to contribute to your community.

<sup>1</sup> Supports is a broad term used to describe the help you need to reach your goals.

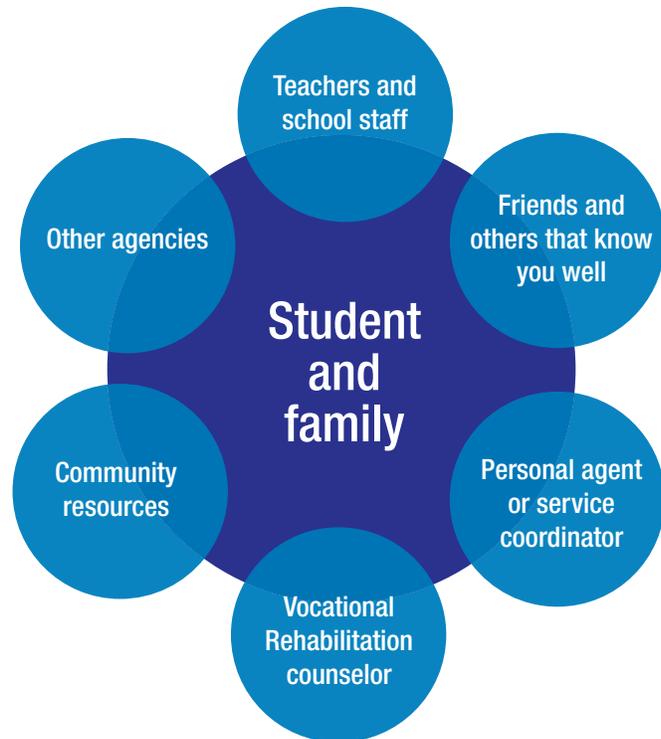


Figure 1. Your transition planning team

### What is integrated competitive employment?

The worker:

- Has a full-time or part-time job in the general work force;
- Earns minimum wage or better;
- Works alongside coworkers without disabilities;
- Accesses the same activities and benefits as employees without disabilities;
- Has equal opportunity for advancement and mobility; and
- Can be self-employed.



## How to use this guide

We organized this guide in 10 sections to help you go through the transition process. Read the entire guide or read the sections most relevant to you.

- Section 1** is an overview of the transition planning process and your planning team.
- Section 2** describes how to develop critical self-determination skills.
- Section 3** presents facilitated person-centered planning as a tool to identify your gifts, strengths and capacities.
- Section 4** details the contents of your individual education plan (IEP) as well as your rights, transition services and diploma options.
- Section 5** discusses finding your community’s natural resources for work and community experiences.
- Section 6** talks about Developmental Disability services, how to apply for them, the eligibility process and the individual support plan (ISP) to receive these services.
- Section 7** describes Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, eligibility, steps to getting a job, and your rights and responsibilities in VR services.
- Section 8** summarizes Social Security benefits, benefits planning and programs to keep your benefits while you earn income.
- Section 9** explains what happens legally when you reach the “age of majority.” This section helps you and your family prepare for this milestone.
- Section 10** includes resources to help you meet your housing and independent living goals, including transportation.

Most sections end with a list of resources. Each list includes websites and other Internet resources that have hyperlinks in that section.

An Appendix includes tools for noting information about your transition process.



# Section 1: Transition planning overview

## Section overview

- Transition planning
- Learn who is on your transition planning team
- Transition process
- Resources

## Transition planning

You and your planning team (Figure 1) will talk about your goals and vision for the future. You will also plan the school, work and community experiences you need to reach your goals.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act, or IDEA 2004, is a federal law enacted in 1975 to ensure that children with disabilities can receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). It also involves transition services to help you move from school to work, further education, adult services, independent living or other types of community participation. Your school writes these services in your individual education plan or IEP.

For transition, your IEP must include:

- Appropriate measurable post-high school goals based on assessments of training, education, employment and independent living skills for your age;
- What you want to study and the transition services you will need to help you reach your goals; and
- Other agencies' appropriate participation, with consent from your parents or you (if you are 18 or older).

Once you begin transition planning, your teachers will add a new transition information section to your IEP. Your IEP thus becomes your transition plan throughout your high school career. You and your team will update activities in your plan at least once a year. These activities will help you move from school to work and adult life. Your school must follow the activities identified in your IEP.

The IDEA 2004 requires that, by age 16, your IEP must include all the transition services you need. Your IEP must also note who or what organization is responsible for providing those services. Your transition planning may begin as early as age 14 at your request, or if deemed appropriate by your IEP team. We recommend transition planning begin as early as possible to give you plenty of time to plan and graduate with the appropriate diploma option (see Section 4). This will help you reach your work and post-high school education goals.

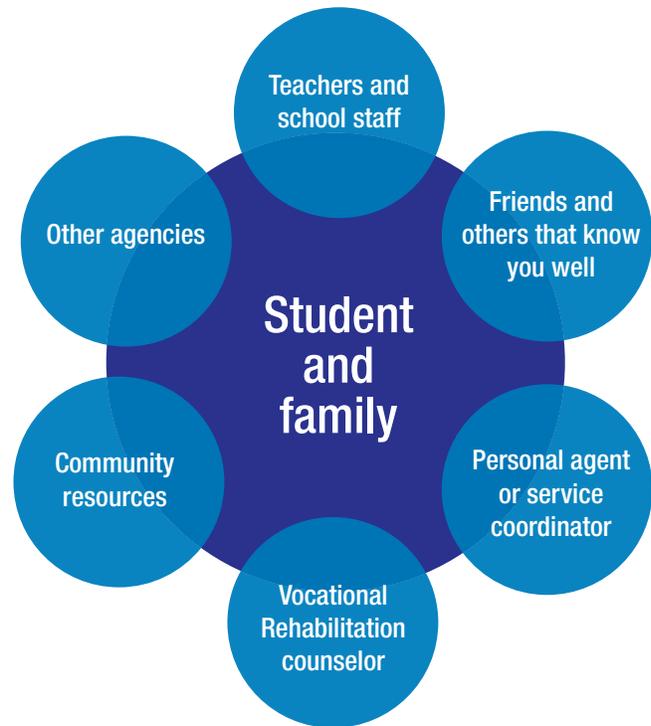


Figure 1. Your transition planning team



## Learn who is on your transition planning team

Your transition planning team includes you and your family, your teachers and school staff, and adult service agency representatives (see Figure 1).

The following people must attend your IEP meetings as IEP team members:

- **You, the student**, are the most important member of the IEP team — after all, it's your life! Your team must include you in planning your transition needs and services if possible. They must base any decisions about your transition needs or services on your preferences, interests, needs and strengths.
- **Parents and other family members** generally know you better than anyone else does. They know your family values, your interests and medical history. They also know when and where you are at your best.
- **Regular education teachers** must be present if you receive instruction in a regular education classroom. Regular education teachers are not required to attend all IEP meetings if you, your parents and the school district have signed a written agreement.
- **Special education teachers** or other specialists that support you, like a resource room teacher, speech therapist or occupational therapist, are part of your team.
- **A representative from your school district** must be present to supervise your education and transition services. The representative also can discuss the curriculum and available resources.
- **A person who can interpret evaluation results** is also on your transition team.
- **Representatives of adult service agencies** may be invited to connect you to adult services. You or your parents (if you are under age 18) must agree to the representative being on your team. The representative may include:
  - A services coordinator from a community developmental disability program (CDDP) or a personal agent from a brokerage to access adult services (see Section 6); and
  - A Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor to create work options based on your skills, abilities and career interests. Learn more about VR services in Section 7.

**Others that know you well** can contribute to your plan. They may include close friends, coaches, teachers or church leaders.

In summary, members of your team collaborate to help with your transition. They take specific steps (both together and separately) to help you transition from school to work and community life with adult services you are eligible to receive. You and your family are at the center of planning and the most important members of your team!

## Adult services and eligibility

Explore a variety of agencies to find out which can offer support, services and resources to help you plan your way to work. In most cases, whether an agency can help you depends on whether you are eligible for its services and whether its services fit your needs. Your work and adult life goals also matter. We've included a summary in Appendix A (see A. Adult services and eligibility). This document provides a quick overview of services described in more detail in this manual.

## Transition process

It is OK to start your transition activities when it is right for you. This process shows key age-appropriate activities to do whether you start at age 14, age 16 or later. Use this process as a planning tool.

We encourage you to start as early as possible. Starting early will give you more time to discover your interests, and to plan and make decisions about your future.

### Work with your transition planning team

- You and your family are major players.
- Your teacher or school staff coordinates the team.
- Your friends and others that know you well share helpful information about you.
- Your service coordinator or personal agent connects you to ongoing services and supports.
- Your Vocational Rehabilitation counselor helps you plan for a job and connects you to employment service providers.
- Other members can represent therapists, adult service providers, employers and more.

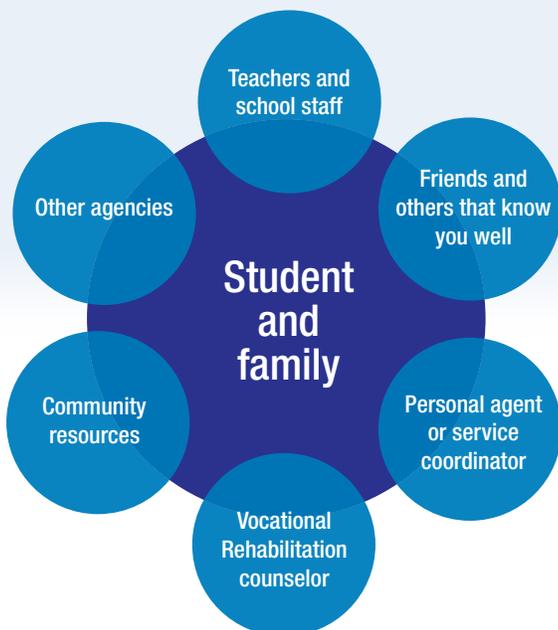


Figure 1. Your transition planning team

## If you start your transition at age 14, consider these activities:

### Teaming — Age 14+

- Set up how you and your team members will communicate. Ongoing communication is key!
- Participate in or lead your IEP meetings.
- Talk about your preferences, interests, needs and strengths (PINS) at your transition planning meetings.
- Plan high school course work to match with diploma requirements and your career interests.
- Plan school and community-based learning experiences to help you develop needed skills.
- Coordinate transition from school supports to ongoing adult services and supports.

### Visioning — Age 14+

- Use the facilitated person-centered planning process to realize your dreams and discover your strengths.
- Create a one-page profile to use when you meet people for the first time.
- Share your vision for your future as an adult.
- Choose a diploma option that fits with your vision.

### Discovering — Age 14+

- Explore the use of assistive devices, mobile technology, environmental supports and accommodations to help you be more independent.
- Plan transition assessments to help your team discover valuable information about you.
- Use interest inventories to learn about careers.
- Use job shadowing to help determine work skills, interests and appropriate supports.
- Visit places in your community that interest you for work, meeting friends, and doing fun things.

### Skill building — Age 14+

- Develop skills you need in your adult life — self-determination, budgeting, cooking, shopping, chores, transportation, relationships, social, hygiene, health and recreation.
- Practice self-determination and other skills at school and at home.
- Participate in extracurricular activities both with peers that have and that do not have disabilities.

## If you start your transition at age 16, consider these activities:

### Discovering — Age 16+

- Attend transition fairs and job fairs to learn about work, college and other opportunities.
- Talk to other young people that have successfully transitioned from school to work or college.
- Coordinate ongoing adult services and supports before you leave school. Maintain access to communication and other technology.
- If you have a job, plan school and time with friends around your work schedule for a balanced life.

### Skill building — Age 16+

- Continue building self-determination and other skills you will need in your adult life.
- Learn how to talk about your strengths and your disability.
- Learn how to ask for accommodations and tell others how to support you best.
- Ask for travel training with your local public transportation agency.
- Plan transportation to and from school and work.
- Get a driver's license or state identification card.
- Develop job skills participating in paid or unpaid school and summer work experiences.
- Build your resume or portfolio.

### Connecting — Age 16+

- Prepare for how you will make decisions about your education when you turn 18. Decide how your family will be involved.
- Explore college, technical schools and training programs.
- Consider a special needs trust and whether guardianship is appropriate for you.
- Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) at your local Social Security Administration office.

- Apply for Developmental Disability (DD) services at your local community DD program (CDDP) office.
- Visit a CDDP and a brokerage to choose one to provide your case management services.
- Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services at your local VR office.
- Request benefits counseling to learn how your benefits are affected by income earned from work.
- Interview employment service providers that may help you get a job before you leave school.
- Open an individual development account (IDA) to save money for your education, employment, specialized equipment or housing goals.
- Apply for housing assistance programs to rent or own your own home.

## As you get closer to age 18 or leaving school, consider these activities:

### Refining — After age 16

Explore multiple elements of adult life that require ongoing decision making and planning such as:

- Time and access to your family and friends;
- Community transportation options;
- Recreation activities you enjoy;
- Fitness activities to stay healthy;
- Volunteer opportunities that enrich your life;
- Your short-term and long-term goals for where you want to live as an adult; and
- Selecting adult health care providers including a dentist.
- Engage in your community through voting and advocacy groups. Register to vote!

**You will find more detail about each of these activities in the following sections.**

## Section 1: Transition planning overview



Generally, team members work together to help you complete these activities. However, one agency may be responsible for helping you do an activity. It is especially important to know what to expect from each agency and when to expect it so you can plan and reach your goals. It is up to you and your family to:

- Ask questions about the process;
- Identify who and which agencies you want on your planning team; and
- Request school services and community activities, including paid and unpaid work, to help reach your employment goals.

Several tools are included in the appendix to help you record important information:

- The adult services and eligibility document (Appendix A) summarizes services and eligibility requirements for programs that may help you reach your goals.
- Transition team contacts (Appendix B) is a place to keep team member contact information.
- The transition planning communication record (Appendix C) is a tool to record the results of conversations with your planning team members.
- The annual transition planning survey (Appendix D) is a place to save information you learn about your strengths, interests, skills and other things about you. You can update this form each year.
- The transition goal action plan (Appendix E) is a planning tool to focus on a goal; how it will be measured; the activities you will do to reach your goal; who is responsible for each one; and when each activity will be completed.

Finally, transition planning gives you powerful opportunities to practice skills that can help shape your future. Examples include setting goals, problem solving, decision making and communication. You may even lead your planning meetings. We talk more about this in the next section.

## Resources

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act, 2004**

<http://idea.ed.gov/download/statute.html>

### **Oregon Administrative Rule 581-015-2000, Special Education**

[http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars\\_500/oar\\_581/581\\_015.html](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_500/oar_581/581_015.html)

### **Oregon Employment First policy**

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/employment/employment-first/Documents/policy.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/employment/employment-first/Documents/policy.pdf)

### **Memorandum of Understanding on Transition of Students with Disabilities to the Workforce**

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/DD/rebar/Documents/MOU%20Transition%20Services.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/DD/rebar/Documents/MOU%20Transition%20Services.pdf)

### **Executive Order 15-01, Providing employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities**

[www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive\\_orders/eo\\_15\\_01.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/executive_orders/eo_15_01.pdf)

## Section 2: Self-determination skills

### Section overview

- Self-determination skills and why they are important
- Promoting self-determination at school
- Student-led IEPs
- The role of parents
- Resources

### Self-determination skills and why they are important

Self-determination means having the knowledge, skills and attitudes to steer your own life toward your goals and dreams for the future. Some people refer to this as “being the boss of your own life.” Several research studies identify a strong relationship between practicing self-determination and experiencing positive school and post-school outcomes, like graduating with a diploma, getting a job and going to college.

Self-determination skills are important because you need them to create the life you want. Additionally, it is critical to develop these skills before you turn 18, when parental rights transfer to you (see Section 9).

When you are the boss of your own life, you have freedom to make your own decisions, take responsibility for your actions, control your services and supports, practice authority over your resources and know what works and doesn’t work for you. For students, this means:

- Actively participating in, or leading, your IEP meetings;
- Speaking up or “advocating” for yourself and saying what you like and don’t like;
- Making decisions about your own life with support from your family and other members of your planning team;
- Identifying your needs for support to reach your education and work goals;
- Giving feedback to your planning team about what works and doesn’t work for you; and
- Accepting responsibility for the decisions you make and learning from mistakes.

Teachers and parents have complementary roles in helping students develop self-determination skills. To promote self-determination, teachers and parents can communicate high expectations to their students early and often. Students with disabilities are often aware of what they cannot do, and less aware of their unique strengths and abilities. High expectations make them more likely to succeed.

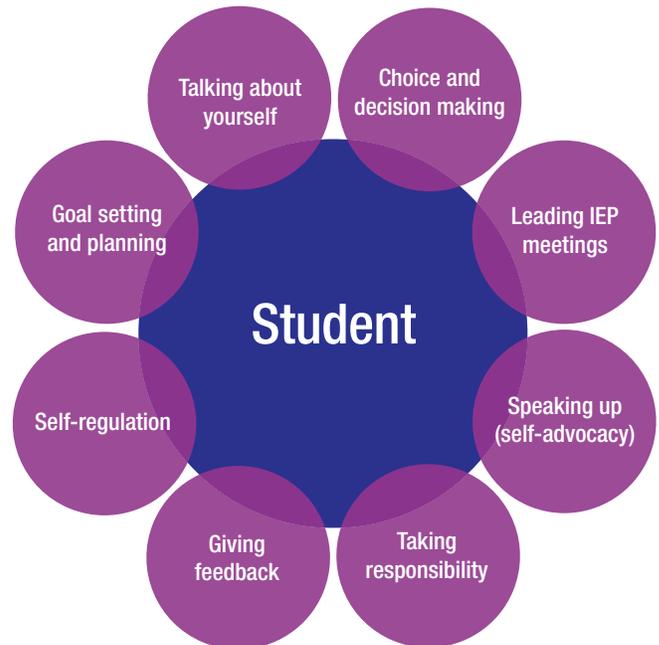


Figure 2. Self-determination skills



### Promoting self-determination at school

Teachers play an important role in teaching the skills and knowledge students need to become self-determined. They do so by providing opportunities to develop these skills in educational activities and experiences and documenting them in the IEP. Educational programs for all students should promote opportunities to:

- Speak up or advocate for themselves;
- Make choices based on personal preferences and interests;
- Participate in decisions that affect the quality of their lives;
- Set personal goals;
- Solve problems that act as barriers to achieving these goals;
- Create action plans to achieve goals; and
- Self-regulate and self-manage day-to-day actions.



**Communicate high expectations to your students early and often.**

Below are examples of school-based learning opportunities teachers can implement for students from elementary school through high school.

#### Early elementary

- Provide opportunities for students to make choices. Teach them that they have control of these choices and that most choices have limited options.
- Promote early problem-solving skills by encouraging students to think aloud as they address simple problems. Teachers should model their own problem-solving processes.
- Provide feedback regarding the outcomes of student choices to teach students the connection between choices and consequences.

#### Late elementary and middle school

- Teach students to analyze options, identify pros and cons of each, and examine past decisions to determine if the consequences were anticipated or desired.
- Coach students to set personal and academic goals, identify steps to achieve goals, and monitor their progress.
- Encourage students to evaluate their performance and reflect on how to improve.

#### Junior high and high school

- Encourage students to make decisions that affect their day-to-day activities, including academic goals, post-school outcomes, schedules and others.
- Emphasize the link between the goals that students set and the daily decisions they make.
- Teach students to direct their own IEP meetings.

### Student-led IEPs

We encourage all students to play an active role in IEP meetings to begin being the boss of their own lives. There are many benefits to participating. As active participants, students:

- Learn more about their disability, including how to talk about and explain the nature of their disability to others;
- Gain confidence in public speaking;
- Learn how to speak up for themselves and ask questions; and
- Become more involved in their own education.



Another benefit of participation is preparing for the future. Once students turn 18 they are legally adults and the process helps prepare them for adult responsibilities and making decisions on their own (see Section 9).

You can lead your IEP meetings in many ways. Some students start by welcoming people to the meeting and introducing participants. With practice and preparation, you can also present important information about you (like your strengths and interests, progress on your goals, or ideas for new goals). You are free to communicate with spoken words or an assistive device, use a PowerPoint presentation or share written notes. How you participate is up to you.

## The role of parents

Parents have the opportunity to foster self-determination beginning at an early age. In addition to communicating high expectations, you can provide experiences at home to complement what should happen at school. The following ideas for fostering self-determination are from other parents of students with disabilities:

- Advocate for your child to be included in general education with peers without disabilities.
- Provide opportunities for your student to be as independent as possible at home and in the community.
- Teach your child problem-solving strategies by identifying the problem, brainstorming solutions, and weighing the pros and cons.
- Discuss issues related to living independently, like paying bills and living within a budget.
- Allow your student to speak for herself.
- Connect your student to activities with peers with and without disabilities that share similar interests.
- Support your student to participate in or lead her own IEP meetings.



**As the parent of a child with disabilities, you are the most important person in your child's education. You know your child better than anyone else.**

## Resources

### Promoting Self-Determination: A Practice Guide (2010)

[http://ngsd.org/sites/default/files/promoting\\_self-determination\\_a\\_practice\\_guide.pdf](http://ngsd.org/sites/default/files/promoting_self-determination_a_practice_guide.pdf)

### Self-Determination and the Education of Students with Disabilities (2002)

<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED470036>

### Fostering Self-Determination Among Children and Youth with Disabilities: Ideas from Parents to Parents (2011)

<http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/naturalsupports/pdfs/FosteringSelfDetermination.pdf>

### Student-Led IEPs (2010)

[http://faculty.virginia.edu/PullenLab/EDIS5141OnlineModules/Mod10/Mod10\\_print.html](http://faculty.virginia.edu/PullenLab/EDIS5141OnlineModules/Mod10/Mod10_print.html)

### Special Education: A Guide for Parents & Advocates, sixth edition (2012)

[http://factoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/DRO-SpEd\\_Guide-6e-with-fact-logo.pdf](http://factoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/DRO-SpEd_Guide-6e-with-fact-logo.pdf)

## Section 3: Facilitated person-centered planning

### Section overview

- Why facilitated person-centered planning is useful
- A strengths-based approach
- Requesting a facilitated person-centered plan
- The one-page profile
- Resources

### Why facilitated person-centered planning is useful

Facilitated person-centered planning helps you and others talk about your strengths and dreams. It is different from your IEP, which guides your education. A facilitated person-centered plan will not replace your IEP or any other planning process you use to receive services after you transition from school. However, a facilitated person-centered plan can provide new information and help your family participate more effectively.



Figure 3. Your person-centered plan

### Your facilitated person-centered plan:

- Provides a way for your family and friends, teachers and others to think about you and how they can best support you;
- Fosters positive working relationships between you and your family and others on your IEP team;
- Improves assessment and planning activities for both school and adult services;
- Provides direction for your school and adult services to help you meet your work and life goals after high school; and
- Identifies natural community connections and supports to help you reach your goals.

### A strengths-based approach

Now let's talk about how the person-centered planning process works. A trained facilitator uses structured exercises to collect information about your strengths, preferences and community opportunities. This helps create ideas about what works for you. It results in a "snapshot" of who you are with possibilities for your future, action steps and responsibilities.

The meeting usually includes family members, close friends and others that care about you. Family members and others can talk about your strengths, interests and opportunities. Teachers, specialists, VR counselors, service coordinators or personal agents and others can contribute resources and creative ways to meet your goals.

Meetings generally take no longer than two hours and can be in your home or any other comfortable meeting space. Facilitators often use poster paper on the walls to record information with words and pictures. Later, this information becomes a printable document for you to take with you to IEP and other planning meetings. Your plan will summarize:

- Your gifts and strengths;
- What works and doesn't work for you;
- What is important to and for you;
- Your interests, connections and dreams;



- Next steps to help you get where you want to go; and
- The people, programs and agencies that can help you get there.

## Requesting a facilitated person-centered plan

Tell your teacher if you would like to schedule a facilitated person-centered plan. He or she may be able to connect you with a trained facilitator. You may also contact the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities at **503-945-9941** or **1-800-292-4154**, or FACT Oregon at **503-786-6082** or the Oregon Technical Assistance Corporation at **503-364-9943** or **1-888-988-3228** to find a local trained facilitator.

## The one-page profile

A one-page profile captures your strengths and the supports you need to be at your best. Although the profile is not required, you will benefit from being able to present your strengths and gifts to others. Your facilitated person-centered plan can provide information for your one-page profile.

You can use a one-page profile in the following ways:

- To share information about you with people you know and people meeting you for the first time — like new teachers, new members of your planning team or potential employers;
- As a cover page for your IEP;
- As a resource about you that can be adapted to school settings, community activities or work experience; and
- As a discussion tool about what is working and not working for you and how to best support you.

There are three sections in a one-page profile:

- What people appreciate about you — your personality, your gifts and talents;
- What is most important to you in your own words; and
- How to support you to be your best.

## Resources

### **The Emergence of Person Centered Planning as Evidence Based Practice (2007)**

[www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/media/25609/research\\_person\\_centred\\_planning.pdf](http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/media/25609/research_person_centred_planning.pdf)

### **The Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities**

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

### **FACT Oregon**

<http://factoregon.org>

### **Sample person-centered plans and templates, FACT Oregon**

<http://factoregon.org/resources/person-centered-plan-samples>

### **Why Every Child Needs a One Page Profile**

[www.personalisingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Why-every-child-needs-a-one-page.pdf](http://www.personalisingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Why-every-child-needs-a-one-page.pdf)

### **Sample one page profiles, templates and tips for developing one page profiles, The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices**

<http://www.learningcommunity.us/onepageprofiles.htm>



# Section 4: Transition services

## Section overview

- Transition IEP requirements
- Your IEP rights
- Contents of your transition plan
- Transition services
- Diploma options
- Summary of performance
- Resources

## Transition IEP requirements

Section 1 contained a brief overview of transition planning and how you and your IEP team can work together for your successful transition from school to work. In this section, we will discuss federal and state requirements that your school must follow to plan and implement your transition IEP. This section also discusses your student and parent rights.

Your IEP must include a transition plan with goals, activities and services designed to help you meet your goals by the time you turn age 16. Transition services help you move from school to work, further education, adult services, independent living or other types of community participation. Your plan is based on your goals and vision for the future. Therefore, activities described in your plan must address your preferences, interests, needs and strengths (PINS) as determined by age-appropriate transition assessments.

During your IEP meetings, you and your IEP team will decide what transition services you need. You and your parents will benefit from actively participating in IEP meetings and knowing your IEP rights.

## Your IEP rights

According to Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) on Special Education, you have the right to:

- Written notice any time the district proposes to review or revise your IEP;
- Written notice any time the district refuses to make a change you requested to the IEP;
- Request an IEP meeting at any time;
- Be present and participate in all your IEP meetings;
- Invite others to your IEP meetings;
- Receive a copy of your IEP; and
- Have any part of your IEP explained to you.
- To resolve any IEP disputes:
  - Ask for more IEP meetings;
  - Request mediation;
  - Write a letter of complaint; or
  - Request a due process hearing.

## Your IEP team's transition planning process

- The school sends a meeting invitation to the student and other planning team members.
- A parent or adult student gives written consent to invite adult service agencies.
- The team helps the student develop his/her preferences, interests, needs and strengths (PINS) that are appropriate for the student's age.
- The school records PINS in the IEP.
- The student and team develop goals that include employment, training, education and independent living.
- The student completes course work each year to meet diploma requirements.
- The student and team develop annual goals that support the student's goals after high school.
- The school gives parents and student notice of transfer of education rights before he/she turns 18 (see Section 9).

## Contents of your transition plan

As noted earlier, your transition plan should address your goals and provide the educational, work and community experiences you need to reach them. Your plan will identify what your school and others will do to help you achieve your goals.

Following is a very brief summary of each part of your IEP. For more information on items listed below, visit the Transition Community Network (see Resources).

Your IEP includes:

- **Age-appropriate assessments** that identify your preferences, interests, needs and strengths (PINS). These assessments may include interest inventories, on-the-job training or an interview with you.
- **Measurable goals** for life after high school graduation for employment, training, education and independent living. These goals must be based on age-appropriate assessments and your PINS.
- **Transition services** for instruction, work, community experiences or related professional services to help you reach your goals after high school.
- **A course of study** that describes the classes you will take each year until you graduate. It must be related to your goals after high school.
- **Annual IEP goals.** You and your team set the broad goals each year to help you meet your overall academic and functional objectives.
- **Involvement of other agencies besides school** with your and/or your parents' consent. This includes businesses, service organizations and other community resources.

## Transition services

You and your team will plan course work and design transition services to help you achieve your goals. Your IEP will document these services to show a clear link between your goals and the services you receive. Examples of transition services include:

- Community experiences;
- Employment development;
- Vocational evaluation;
- Job training;
- Instruction on activities of daily living; and
- Goals for life after high school.

## Work-related transition services

You and your parents can request paid and unpaid work experiences to help you develop job skills. These experiences should reflect your strengths and career interests. Your school must help you acquire work skills that relate to your career interests and goals written in your IEP. Information from your facilitated person-centered plan or community mapping process (Section 5) can also help develop work-related experiences while you are still in school. Your team should also help place you in a job and follow up with you during your transition from school to work.



Figure 4. Work-related transition services

## Section 4: Transition services



Ask your team what opportunities your school or community has. On-the-job experiences outside of school shape your career interests and help you develop critical job skills. Here are some of the most common activities, which are also shown in Figure 4.

- Mock job interviews to practice interview skills;
- Workplace visits, gaining an appreciation for different types of jobs in your community;
- Job shadowing according to your interests, where you accompany an employee at a job you like during his or her typical work day;
- Mentoring, in which you do a job with an experienced mentor who gives you guidance;
- Paid or unpaid internships or time-limited work experience; and
- Paid part-time or summer jobs with support provided by school staff.

## Diploma options

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) provides four options for leaving school. Be sure you understand each option so you can pursue the one that best relates to your goals and dreams. For example, if you plan to attend college or a university, you should work toward the Oregon diploma. Opportunities for education after high school, federal financial aid and the military are limited with the extended diploma and alternate certificate.

Oregon legislators passed House Bill 2193 during the 2013 session. Now, school districts and public charter schools must tell parents each year about after-high school options and their requirements. Parents begin getting this information when their child is in fifth grade. A description of each option and a comparison (Table 1) follow. We encourage you to consider these options carefully and discuss them with your IEP team.

**The Oregon diploma** is a regular high school diploma awarded to any student who completes the 24 required credits at his or her grade level (Table 1). This can include reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The Oregon diploma prepares students to go directly to any college or university, the work force or the military. If your goals include these opportunities, the Oregon diploma is for you.

**A modified diploma** is for students that, because of a disability or medical condition, cannot complete the 24 credits at grade level required for an Oregon diploma (even with reasonable accommodations). However, these students fulfill all other state requirements for an Oregon diploma. This option is only considered after you begin high school and have trouble performing at your grade level.

Note: Some colleges or trade schools may accept Oregon students that receive modified diplomas. These students may be eligible for some types of federal financial aid.

**The extended diploma** is for only those that are not able to fulfill the requirements for an Oregon or modified diploma either due to an intellectual disability or to serious illness or injury occurring after the eighth grade.

**An alternate certificate** is available for students that cannot meet diploma requirements. Requirements for alternate certificates vary by individual school districts.

If you do not receive an Oregon diploma, you can have three more years of full-day educational services (until age 21). During this time, you will focus on the transition from school to work and adult life. Services are at the same 990 hours a year you had in high school.

A summary of the diploma credit requirements follows. It also includes the skills and credits you will need for each diploma option.

**Table 1. Diploma credit requirements and essential skills, 2014**

Academic subjects	Oregon diploma	Modified diploma	Extended diploma
English/language arts	4	3	2
Mathematics	3	2	2
	Content at Algebra 1 and above		
Science	3	2	2
	Scientific inquiry and lab experiences		
Social sciences	3	2 <sup>2</sup>	3
Physical education	1	1	1
Health	1	1	1
Second languages/ the arts /career and technical education	3	1 <sup>3</sup>	1
Electives	6	12 <sup>4</sup>	
<b>Total credits</b>	24	24	12
<b>Essential skills</b>	Reading	Reading	N/A
	Writing	Writing	N/A
	Math	Math	N/A

## Summary of performance

The school must provide a summary of performance (SOP) during your last year of high school when you graduate with an Oregon diploma or leave school at the end of the school year in which you turn age 21. The ODE recommends but does not require school districts to provide an SOP for students graduating with a modified or extended diploma or an alternate certificate.

The SOP summarizes your performance at school. It may include supports that worked for you in high school and recommendations for work or college accommodations. You can use your SOP to discuss your strengths and support needs in your adult services, higher education or employment. You can also use your facilitated person-centered plan or one-page profile in this way.

<sup>2</sup> Social sciences may include history, civics, geography and economics (including personal finance).

<sup>3</sup> Second languages/the arts/ career and technical education (CTE) units may be earned in any one or a combination of courses.

<sup>4</sup> School districts and public charter schools are flexible in awarding the remaining 12 units of credits. The credits must meet the student's needs specified in his or her education plan. The expectations and standards must meet the appropriate grade level academic content standards. These credits may include: (a) additional core credits; (b) career and technical education; (C) electives; and (D) career development.



## Resources

### **Transition Community Network**

<http://tcntransition.org>

### **Oregon diploma**

[www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2861](http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2861)

### **Modified diploma**

[www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/modifieddiplomaoar.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/modifieddiplomaoar.pdf)

### **Extended diploma**

[www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/extendeddiplomaoar.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/extendeddiplomaoar.pdf)

### **Alternative certificate**

[www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/alternativecertificateoar.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/alternativecertificateoar.pdf)

### **Diploma Options FAQ**

[www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/moddipfaq-final.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/moddipfaq-final.pdf)

### **Executive Numbered Memorandum 008-2013-14 — Modified and Extended Diplomas — Clarification Regarding Federal Financial Aid**

[www.ode.state.or.us/news/announcements/announcement.aspx?=9806](http://www.ode.state.or.us/news/announcements/announcement.aspx?=9806)

### **Letter to parents from PPS about transition services**

[www.youthrightsjustice.org/media/1939/FINAL%20PPS%20CTP%20parent%20letter.pdf](http://www.youthrightsjustice.org/media/1939/FINAL%20PPS%20CTP%20parent%20letter.pdf)

### **Examples of transition assessment methods, definitions, examples and websites**

[www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special\\_ed/documents/age\\_app\\_trans\\_assess.pdf](http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed/documents/age_app_trans_assess.pdf)

### **The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) Career and Technical Education resources**

[www.careertech.org/Oregon](http://www.careertech.org/Oregon)

# Section 5: Understanding your community's resources

## Section overview

- Your community's natural resources
- Developing a community inventory

Transition involves a number of people and agencies or formal resources (like school and adult services). They all have eligibility requirements and government funding. You will also benefit from connections to local people, places and organizations. This section provides ideas to help you find community resources to create opportunities for work and community experiences written in your IEP.

## Your community's natural resources

Every neighborhood and its surrounding community have unique and important resources for people that live, work and play there. Neighbors frequently look out for each other and come together to celebrate and have fun. Neighborhoods also include businesses, community centers, places to recreate, and civic and spiritual organizations. These people and places are your community's natural resources.

## Develop a community inventory

Your school and other agencies may or may not help you connect with these resources, but you and your family can do this on your own. For example, you can:

- Develop a community inventory. List places and events in your community where people spend their time. Plan to visit for fun. You may also connect with people that share interests.
- Think about your inventory as resources for work and community experiences in your IEP. Share your inventory with your IEP team to identify how they fit into your plan. These resources are also useful in facilitated person-centered planning.
- Look for ways to volunteer at community events or with organizations that serve the community. You may develop valuable connections for future work.

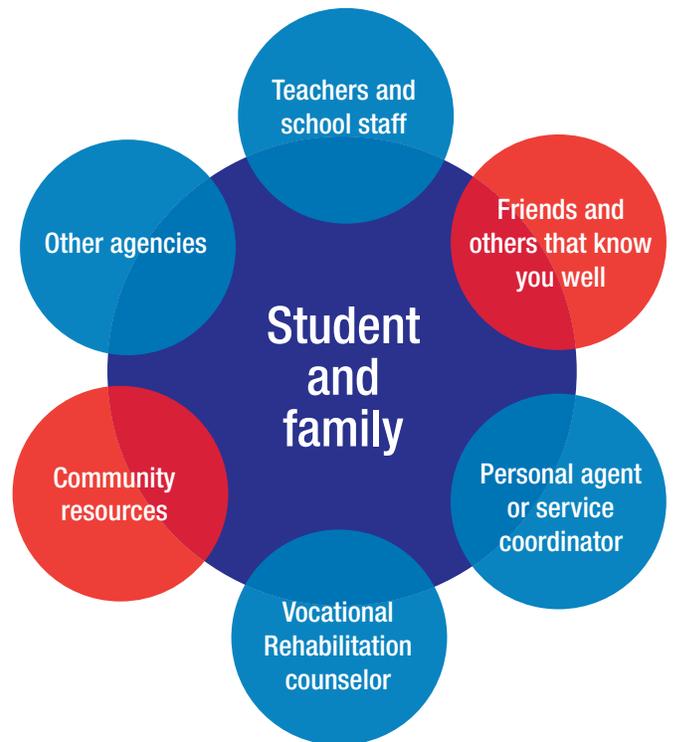


Figure 1a. Your transition planning team



# Section 6: Adult Developmental Disability services

## Section overview

- Eligibility for Developmental Disability services
- Case management — it is your choice!
- The adult needs assessment (ANA)
- The individual support plan (ISP)
- Adult DD services
- Using your services to get a job
- Problem solving
- Resources

The Developmental Disability Program (Office of Developmental Disability Services or ODDS) offers services that help people meet their goals. If you are eligible, Developmental Disability (DD) services may help you live, work and enjoy your adult life in the community.

## Eligibility for Developmental Disability services

Contact your local community developmental disability program (CDDP) to find out if you are eligible for services. An eligibility worker will help you complete the application and collect any needed documents. Your IEP team may also help you. The application is available on the ODDS website in English, Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese.

The eligibility worker will use your completed application and other documents to determine if you are eligible for DD services. In general, you may be eligible if:

- You have an intellectual *or* developmental disability;
- This disability makes everyday living skills like walking and communicating hard to do; and
- Your disability is not caused by mental disorder, sensory impairment, personality disorder, substance abuse, learning disability or attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD).

A CDDP must tell you if you are eligible for DD services within 10 days of getting your completed application. You will receive a “Notification of Rights” letter in the mail. The letter explains three things:

- Whether or not you are eligible for DD services and why;
- Your right to an administrative hearing if you are not found eligible (during this hearing, you can explain why you are eligible); and
- How to file an administrative hearing request.

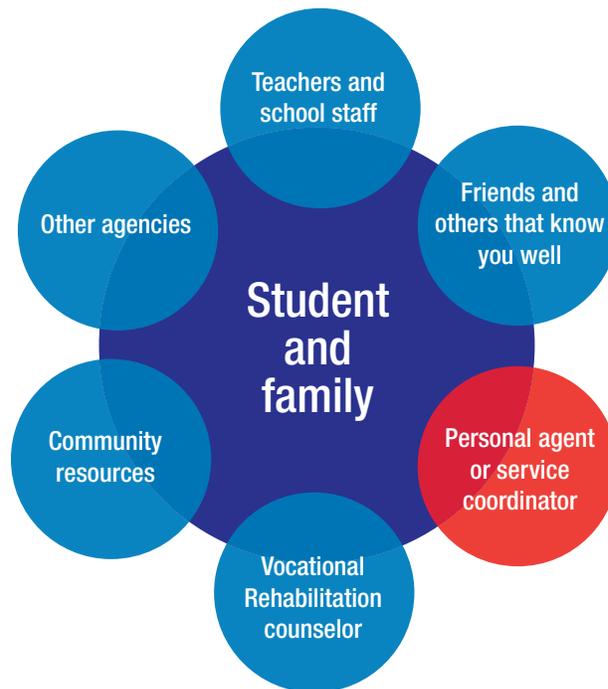


Figure 1b. Your transition planning team

### What is a developmental disability?

A developmental disability (DD) is a severe intellectual or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments that:

- Begins before a person is 22 years of age or 18 years of age for an intellectual disability;
- Begins in and directly affects the brain and has continued, or is expected to continue indefinitely; and
- Causes significant problems with behaviors such as communicating, grooming, dressing, safety and social skills.

See the full definition of “developmental disability” and related terms in OAR 411-320-0020.



Note: We recommend you find out if you are eligible for DD services during your first year of high school or earlier. This will help you and your personal agent or service coordinator plan your transition as early as possible.

## Case management — it's your choice!

Once you are eligible for services, you will go through a choice advising process to learn your options for case management and other ODDS services available. If you are an adult living in your family home or your own home, you can choose to receive case management services from:

- Either a services coordinator (SC) at your local CDDP; or
- A personal agent (PA) at a local support services brokerage.

**CDDPs** are local state offices serving one or more counties. They determine eligibility and provide case management services and home and community-based services to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

**Support services brokerages** are private organizations that provide case management and home- and community-based services to adults with IDD. Brokerages follow a philosophy of self-determination. They focus on helping people direct their own services and lives. Learn more at [www.mybrokeragemychoice.org](http://www.mybrokeragemychoice.org).

Your case manager is your key to getting help to live the life you want. You need to feel comfortable in this relationship. We recommend that you visit a local CDDP or brokerage to find a good fit for you and your vision for your life.

## The adult needs assessment

After you become eligible for services, your SC or PA will conduct an adult needs assessment (ANA) with you. The ANA is a series of personal questions that will show what kind and how much support you need.

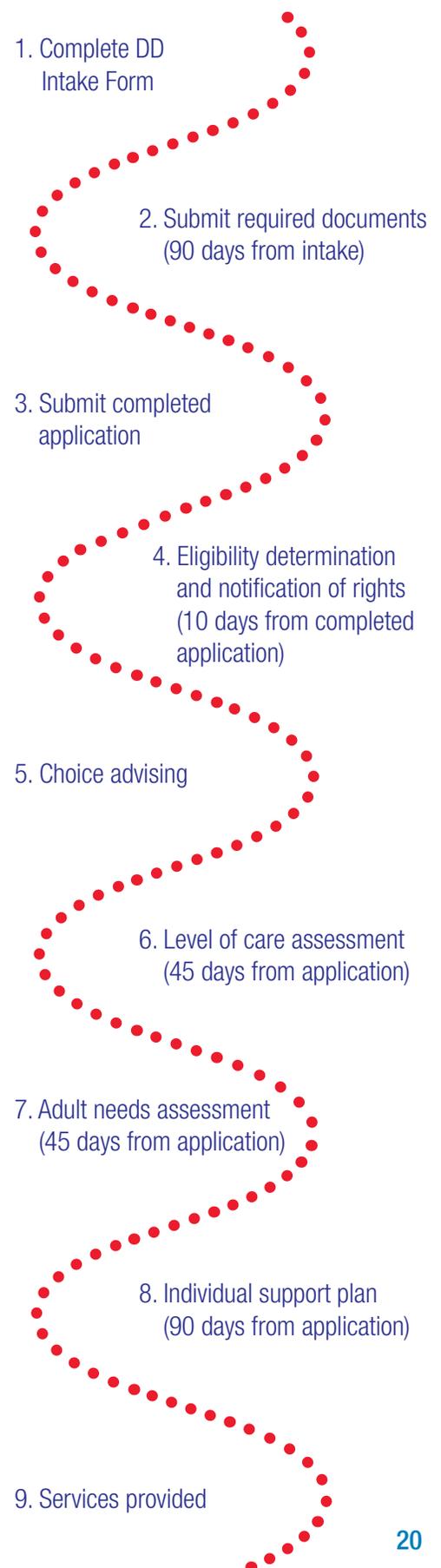
The ANA looks at the support you need on a typical day. Some of the questions are about personal things like the amount of help you need to use the bathroom or take care of your body. Other questions cover topics like the amount of help you need to communicate, get around in your community or manage money.

The adult needs assessment may not catch all your support needs. For example, you may not always speak or get around the same way all the time. As a result, some of your needs for support may not be obvious during your ANA meeting. Think about all the support you need. Here are some ideas to help you get ready for your ANA:

- Think about a typical day. List any help you receive from family or friends during different times of the day.
- Invite people to the ANA meeting that know you well (like siblings, parents or close friends) to share information about you.

Your adult needs assessment results will lead to your individual support plan.

Figure 5. Steps to get DD services





## The individual support plan

Your individual support plan (ISP) is an important document that explains your needs, goals, choices and services for the next year. Your ISP is based on the outcome of your ANA. Your ISP:

- Describes what a full and happy day looks like and the supports you need to have it;
- Explores and identifies your employment and other goals; and
- Describes your plan for supports to help you reach your goals.

During your ISP meeting, you will talk with your ISP team about your interests. You will decide your goals and the supports you need. Your ISP team includes you and your SC or PA and any other people you invite to participate; examples are friends, family or representatives from other agencies that support you.

Once your plan is complete, your SC or PA will connect you to community service providers. You can interview them to select those that provide the supports you need. Ask your SC or PA for tips to interview providers.

You and your ISP team will meet at least once a year to update your goals. However, you may ask for a planning meeting any time your support needs or goals change.

## What is Medicaid?

Medicaid is a health program for low-income people and families funded through a partnership between Oregon and the federal government. The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) make the rules. Oregon administers its Medicaid program with approval from CMS. Medicaid services are available through Medicaid state plans and home- and community-based waivers. Waivers waive your right to receive services in an institution. This makes it possible for you to receive services in your community.

### Medicaid state plans

A Medicaid state plan is a contract between Oregon and CMS. The state plan explains how Oregon administers the programs covered by the state plan. It also explains who is covered, services that are covered, how providers get paid, and quality assurance measures.

Medicaid state plans are entitlements. This means you cannot be on a wait list to access state plan services. If a doctor or assessment says you need a state plan service that you are eligible for, you must quickly receive it. If you need a state plan service, Oregon cannot say it does not have the resources to provide it.

Oregon has two state plans serving people with IDD:

1. The Oregon Health Plan provides basic health insurance coverage (doctor, hospital, prescriptions) to individuals and families with income up to 138% of the federal poverty level (FPL).
2. The Community First Choice (K Plan) provides personal care and other services in home and community settings. To receive these services you must:
  - Be assessed for and meet the “institutional level of care (LOC)” standard. You would require care in a hospital, nursing facility or institution if you did not have these services.
  - Have an individual or family income up to 138% FPL or be on a waiver.



### Medicaid home- and community-based waivers

Medicaid home- and community-based waivers allow states to provide long-term services in a “home- and community-based” setting instead of in a nursing home, state psychiatric hospital or institution for people with IDD. Oregon uses two waivers to deliver community services to adults with IDD — the comprehensive services waiver and the support services waiver.

Waivers are different from state plans because they can:

- Have wait lists;
- Be limited to certain populations, like adults with IDD;
- Have different income rules than the state plan. Oregon’s IDD waivers allow income up to 300% SSI; and
- Look at only the person’s income rather than the family’s income for eligibility purposes.

## Adult DD services

Oregon provides adult DD services through two state and federally funded Medicaid programs:

- The Community First Choice Option or “K Plan”; and
- Home-based and community-based waivers. Oregon has two Medicaid waivers that serve adults — the Comprehensive Services Waiver and the Supports Services Waiver.

Both the K Plan and the waivers provide long-term services in your home and community rather than in a nursing home or a hospital. These supports also may allow you to receive what you need to keep a job while you are still in school.

The Medicaid programs that provide DD services are complex. You can make sure you get the services and supports you need by understanding how the programs work. See the above box for more information on Medicaid, state plans and home- and community-based waivers.

Now, let’s talk about the services available under the K Plan and the waivers. If eligible, you may receive DD services through both the K Plan and one of the waivers. These services are based on your eligibility, the results of your ANA, the contents of your ISP, and what you want your life to be like.

## K Plan services

Services available in the K Plan are listed below. A link to the Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) with full service descriptions is included under resources at the end of this section. The rule gives detailed information about what these services mean, including:

- Attendant care to help you with needs like bathing, dressing, eating, housekeeping, meal preparation and shopping;
- Transportation;
- Relief (respite) care for your caregiver;
- Assistive technology (\$5,000 per year) to support a person’s independence;
- Training on how to manage your own personal support workers;
- Home modifications (\$5,000 per year);
- Behavior support;
- Chore services; and
- Skill development.

See Resources at the end of this section for links to the rules that describe K Plan services.



## Waiver services

Services available in the comprehensive and supports waivers are listed below:

- Supported employment (job development, job coaching, small group);
- Prevocational services (discovery and career exploration, employment path);
- Case management;
- Vehicle modifications;
- Special diets (support services waiver);<sup>5</sup> and
- Family training (comprehensive services waiver).<sup>6</sup>

## Using your services to get a job

Now we will talk about waiver services that will help you get a job.

Ideally, you will leave school with a job and can get job coaching while you are still in school. However, if you do not have a job before you leave school and are eligible for DD services, you may access the services below. Figure 6 is an example of how DD services can help you find and keep a job. However, people find jobs many ways, so this process may vary for you. Finally, if you are not eligible for DD services, you can contact VR. VR services are for people with most types of disabilities (see Section 7 for more information).

Below is a description of employment services to help you get and keep a job you like in your community.

**Discovery and career exploration** is a process of learning about a person and how he or she best works. This process typically leads to VR referral.

**Job development** helps a person find a competitive job in the general work force or develop self-employment.

**Job coaching** is ongoing support that helps a person keep a competitive job in the general work force, advance in a career or continue to be self-employed.

**Small group supported employment** provides services and training to groups of two to eight people in business, industry and the community. This service helps people reach their goal of getting a competitive job in the work force.

**Employment path services** help people learn work-related skills and gain work experience, including volunteering. These services are in the community or a facility. They are expected to lead to a job in the general work force.

<sup>5</sup> This service is only available in the supports services waiver.

<sup>6</sup> This service is only available in the comprehensive services waiver.

Figure 6. Using your services to get a job





## Problem solving

Sometimes, things do not go as planned or expected. It is important to let your SC or PA know when you are not happy with your services. In that case, you can file a formal complaint. Complaints are important because they provide information to CDDPs, brokerages and the Developmental Disability Program about problems that need to be fixed. Use the Developmental Disabilities Services Complaint Form (SDS 0946) to file a complaint in person, by phone or in writing. File your complaint with the provider organization, your PA or SC, or the brokerage or CDDP director. You must receive a written acknowledgment within five business days and a written response to your complaint within 45 days. You can often resolve complaints locally by talking with your PA, SC and the director.

If you are not satisfied with the response, you may use the DD Services Complaint Form to ask the CDDP manager or brokerage director to conduct a formal review. You must receive a written response to the formal review request within 30 days of the date you submitted the form.

If your problem is not solved by taking these steps, you can request an administrative review or Medicaid fair hearing. See the individual rights and complaint process in Oregon Administrative Rule 410-318-000 for information on how to pursue an action.

## Resources

### CDDP contact information

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/DD/Pages/county\\_programs.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/DD/Pages/county_programs.aspx)

### Application form for DD services available in English, Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/DD/Pages/eligibility.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/DD/Pages/eligibility.aspx)

### Community Developmental Disability Programs, eligibility determination, OAR 411-320-0080

[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411\\_320.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411_320.pdf)

### Definition of developmental disability, OAR 411-320-0020

[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411\\_320.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411_320.pdf)

### Brokerage contact information

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/dd/adults/brokerages.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/dd/adults/brokerages.pdf)

### Learn more about brokerages

<http://mybrokeragemychoice.org/wp/>

### Expenditure guidelines for students receiving employment services while in school

- For the comprehensive waiver:  
[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/transmit/pt/2013/pt13016.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/transmit/pt/2013/pt13016.pdf)
- For the supports waiver:  
[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/transmit/pt/2013/pt13011.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/transmit/pt/2013/pt13011.pdf)

### K State Plan, OAR 411-035-000

[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411\\_035.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411_035.pdf)

### Support Services, OAR 411-340-000

[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411\\_340.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411_340.pdf)

### Comprehensive Services, OAR 411-330-000

[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411\\_330.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411_330.pdf)

### Employment services for individuals with developmental disabilities, OAR 411-345-000

[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411\\_345.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411_345.pdf)

### Developmental Disabilities Services Complaint Form (SDS 0946)

<https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/se0946.pdf>

### Individual rights and complaint process, OAR 410-318-000

[www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411\\_318.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/spd/rules/411_318.pdf)



# Section 7: Vocational Rehabilitation services

## Section overview

- Getting Vocational Rehabilitation services
- VR employment services
- New pre-employment transition services
- Your responsibilities
- Your rights
- Problem solving
- Resources

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) is a state and federally funded resource for people with disabilities. It is housed within the Department of Human Services. VR can help you explore your career interests, and find and keep a job you like.

In the following section, you will learn how to get Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services (Figure 7) and the types of services you may receive if you are eligible. You may have already begun this process if you are working with a VR counselor during your transition.

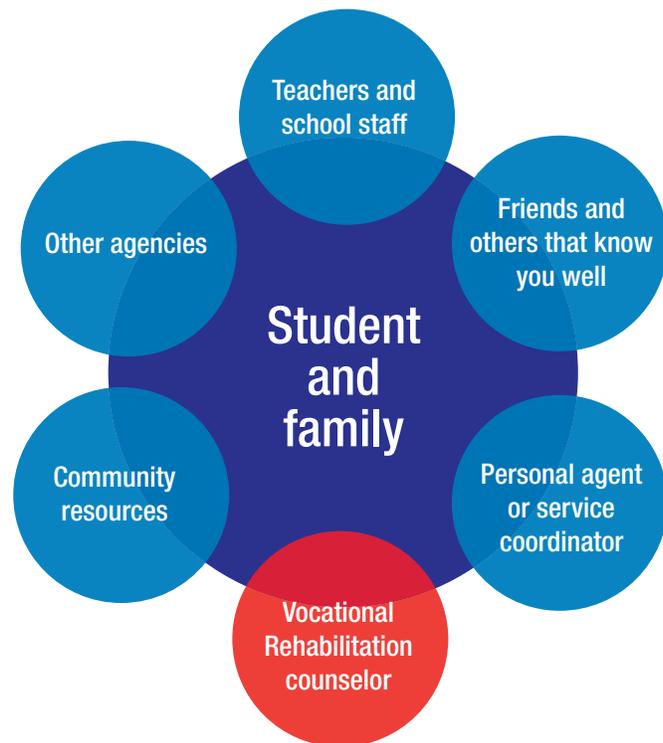


Figure 1c. Your transition planning team

## Getting Vocational Rehabilitation services

VR can start working with you as young as 14 to assess your skills and decide the accommodations you may need to work. When you turn 17, VR can begin the intake process. Following is the process to get VR services:

- 1. Contact your local VR office to schedule an orientation appointment.** You may receive a Personal Information Form in the mail. If so, bring your completed form to your first appointment. You will find a link to local VR offices in Resources.
- 2. Attend an orientation meeting** (either in a group or one-to-one) to learn how VR services work, ask questions and decide whether you want to apply for services.
- 3. Attend an intake interview and apply for VR services.** A VR counselor will meet with you for about an hour to learn about you, your disability and your career interests. During this meeting, you will complete a one-page application form to apply for VR services. You may also complete any needed release forms for your school, medical and other records. Your records help determine whether you are eligible for VR services.

Note: You can speed up the eligibility process by bringing requested materials to your first appointment. Be sure to ask what documentation you need; examples include your facilitated person-centered plan or one-page profile, documentation of your disability from school and medical records.

- 4. Request benefits counseling.** It is an important service to help you understand how earned income may affect your Social Security and Medicaid benefits. You need this information to make the best decision. We recommend you request benefits counseling if it is not offered to you early in the VR process.
- 5. Your eligibility for VR services is determined.** Eligibility can take 60 days or longer. Bring copies of your personal records to speed up the process.



6. **Set a job goal.** You and your VR counselor will set a job goal that fits with your talents and interests. Your counselor can help with this and research jobs that would be a good match.
7. **Sign your individual plan for employment.** You and your counselor will write your plan for employment (IPE). It describes the steps you will take to meet your job goal. Your IPE must be signed within 90 days of eligibility.
8. **Work with an employment specialist or job developer** to help you find a job that matches your talents and interests.
9. **VR follows up and closes your case.** After you are in your job for at least 90 days and all is going well, VR will close your case. You can ask for post-employment services if you need more help to keep your current job, get a new job or advance in your career.

## VR employment services

VR offers a variety of services to help people with disabilities prepare for, get and keep jobs. The services you use depend on your individual circumstances.

**Assessment services** measure your strengths, capabilities, work skills and interests. These services help you select a job goal and the VR services you need to reach it.

**Counseling and guidance** help you make informed decisions about how to reach your goals.

**Independent living skills** address barriers to employment. For example, you may learn more about taking care of yourself, how to best manage your money and use community transportation.

**Assistive technology** is low- or high-tech devices (like switches or computer software) to help you communicate or complete work tasks.

**Training** provides you with work skills needed to achieve your employment goal.

**Job placement** services include help with application forms, developing a resume, practicing interview skills, identifying job leads, keeping your new job, and working with your employer to get the disability accommodations you need.

Figure 7. Steps to VR services





## **New pre-employment transition services**

In July 2014, the U.S. Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to help people with disabilities secure good jobs and advance in their careers. WIOA affects many agencies that provide employment services to people with disabilities, including state education and VR agencies. The act requires that local school districts and VR agencies work together to make “pre-employment transition services” available to students with disabilities. These services include:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after-school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships);
- Help to enroll in colleges or universities;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in speaking up for yourself.

The Oregon Office of VR and the Department of Education are collaborating to make these services available soon.

## **Your responsibilities**

Below is a list of your responsibilities as a VR customer. Following through on your responsibilities can help you get the most out of your experience.

- Communicate openly with your counselor, including discussing your concerns, interests and goals.
- Maintain records of discussions with VR and all the paperwork you receive.
- Keep your counselor informed of changes in your circumstances.
- Ask questions when you do not understand.
- Use the problem-solving options listed below when you do not agree with an action about your VR services.

## **Your rights**

You also have rights in your services. You have the right to:

- Know if you are eligible for VR services within 60 days of applying;
- Understand the process and how decisions are made;
- Participate in assessments and developing your IPE;
- A written copy of your IPE and all decisions;
- Review of your IPE once a year;
- Administrative review of decisions you disagree with; and
- Mediation of disagreements.



## Problem solving

If at any time you are unhappy with a decision or action regarding your VR services, you have several ways to resolve the problem.

- Discuss the problem with your counselor or the VR branch manager.
- Call the Client Assistance Program (CAP) housed within Disability Rights Oregon at **1-800-452-1694**. CAP offers information, advice and advocacy to help you resolve problems.
- Call **1-877-277-0513** to ask the VR dispute resolution coordinator for an administrative review. This is an informal meeting with a VR staff member who has not worked on your case.
- Submit a written request for mediation services using the Request for Mediation Services Form within 30 days of the decision or action that you do not like.
- Submit a written request for a hearing using the Impartial Hearing Request Form within 60 days. During the hearing, a hearings officer will listen to evidence and make a decision.

## Resources

### VR local offices

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/Pages/vr-offices.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/Pages/vr-offices.aspx)

### Referral, application and eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, OAR 582-050-0000

[http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars\\_500/oar\\_582/582\\_050.html](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_500/oar_582/582_050.html)

### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 2014

[www.doleta.gov/WIOA](http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA)

### WIA is now WIOA: what the new bill means for people with disabilities

[www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article\\_id=382](http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=382)

### VR dispute resolution

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/pages/dispute\\_resolution.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/pages/dispute_resolution.aspx)

### Oregon Client Assistance Program

<http://droregon.org/employment>

### Mediation Request Form

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/publications/mediation-request.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/publications/mediation-request.pdf)

### Impartial Hearing Request Form

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/publications/hearing-request.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/publications/hearing-request.pdf)



# Section 8: Social Security benefits

## Section overview

- Social Security disability benefits
- Applying for Social Security benefits
- Benefits counseling
- Work incentives
- Employed Persons with Disabilities
- Resources

The federal Social Security Administration (SSA) provides cash assistance to people with disabilities through two programs: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). These programs are complex but a great help to people with disabilities that want to work.

Many people think that they cannot receive disability benefits if they work. This is not true. In fact, people with disabilities can earn income from work and keep their benefits. This section explains how benefits counseling and employment supports help you keep your benefits while earning income from work.

## Social Security disability benefits

Social Security pays cash benefits through the SSDI and SSI programs to people that have a disability or medical condition expected to last at least one year. Table 2 compares these two programs.

**SSDI** is a monthly cash benefit paid to people that are unable to work for a year or more due to disability or a medical condition. The worker (you or a parent) must have worked long enough to have paid Social Security taxes.

**SSI** is a monthly cash benefit paid to people with disabilities, the elderly and the blind (based on financial need) to help them meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter.

**Table 2. Comparison of the SSDI and SSI disability programs**

	<b>SSDI</b>	<b>SSI</b>
<b>Source of payments</b>	Disability trust fund	General tax revenues
<b>Minimum initial qualification 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 provided</b>	Medicare. This coverage includes hospital insurance, supplementary medical insurance and Medicare Advantage.	Medicaid-funded health insurance. Our state version is the Oregon Health Plan.
<b>How do we figure your 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.	Based on the Federal Benefit Rate (FBR) that changes annually. The 2015 FBR is \$733 for a qualified person and \$1,100 for a couple. 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	Oregon's supplement amount varies.



## Applying for Social Security benefits

We recommend you apply for Social Security benefits well before you turn age 18. The process takes between three and five months and can sometimes take longer. There are two ways to apply:

1. Apply online at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).
2. Call **1-800-772-1213** to make an appointment at your local Social Security office or to set up an appointment for someone to take your claim over the telephone.

The disability claims interview lasts approximately one hour. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may call SSA's toll-free TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days. If you schedule an appointment, Social Security will send you a Disability Starter Kit to help you get ready for the interview. (Find your local Social Security office at <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>.)

## Benefits counseling

Benefits counseling is for anyone who receives Social Security benefits and wants to work. A benefits counselor will help you understand how income earned from work affects your Social Security benefits. A benefits counselor can also help you make decisions about work and help you use the SSI and/or SSDI work incentive programs. These programs are sometimes called employment supports.

Oregon has two statewide benefits counseling programs: Plan for Work and The Work Incentives Network. These programs are free to eligible participants, offer the same services and are available across the state. You can get the services in person or by phone.

Plan for Work is funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and is located at Disability Rights Oregon. To be eligible for this program you must be:

- Receiving a disability-based benefit (SSI and/or SSDI);
- Between 14 years old and retirement age; and
- Considering employment or employed.



**If you are eligible for both programs, you have the right to choose either WIN or WIPA — it is your choice!**

To make an appointment, 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 counseling.

The Work Incentives Network, funded by Vocational Rehabilitation, is housed at independent living centers throughout Oregon. To receive services, you must be:

- A current or previous VR customer, or have started the VR application process; and
- A person receiving disability-based benefits who wants to work or is working.

To make an appointment, email **Gene Rada** at [Eugene.e.rada@state.or.us](mailto:Eugene.e.rada@state.or.us) or **Paula Fitch** at [Paula.fitch@state.or.us](mailto:Paula.fitch@state.or.us), or call **1-800-661-2571 x 103**. Leave a voicemail with name, contact information and interest in benefits counseling.



## Work incentives

The SSA offers incentives to help you work and move toward financial independence. You can use one or more of these incentives to:

- Help you find a job or start a business;
- Protect your cash and medical benefits while you work; or
- Save money to go to school.

A benefits counselor can help you decide which employment supports will help you reach your work goals. We've summarized several work incentive programs in Table 3 below. The "SSA Red Book" includes detailed information about each work incentive.

**Table 3. Social Security work incentives**

	<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 the 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):</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.	Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS): 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.
		Student earned income exclusion (SEIE): 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).

Work incentives are complex but can help you earn income from work and keep your benefits. We recommend that you request benefits counseling early to help you explore these and other options.



## Employed Persons with Disabilities

Oregon's Employed Persons with Disabilities (EPD) buy-in program allows you to continue earning income from work (up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level for a family of one after deductions) while also keeping your Medicaid health insurance and long-term supports. This program allows you to "buy-in" at a very low cost (\$0–\$150 per month).

EPD provides comprehensive medical coverage with the following benefits:

- EPD may be used to supplement other types of medical coverage, such as private health insurance and Medicare;
- EPD includes coverage for long-term services that are not usually included in major medical insurance plans;
- EPD covers pre-existing conditions; and
- EPD's fee is affordable, ranging from \$0 to \$150 per month.

Remember: If you receive disability benefits and want to work, contact the Plan For Work program or the Work Incentives Network. These programs can help you earn income and keep your benefits.

## Resources

### Social Security Administration

[www.ssa.gov/disability](http://www.ssa.gov/disability)

### SSDI booklet

[www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10029.pdf](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10029.pdf)

### SSI booklet

[www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-11000.pdf](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-11000.pdf)

### Working While Disabled booklet

[www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10095.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10095.pdf)

### Online application

[www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi](http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityssi)

### Disability Starter Kit

[www.ssa.gov/disability/disability\\_starter\\_kits.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits.htm)

### Social Security office locator

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

### Plan for Work program

<http://droregon.org/topics/plan-for-work>



# Section 9: Transfer of parental rights

## Section overview

- The transfer of parental rights
- Informal options to transfer of rights
- Formal options to transfer of rights
- Resources

The Individuals with Disabilities Employment and Improvement Act (IDEA) provides for the transfer of parental educational rights when students with disabilities on IEPs reach the age of majority, or the age at which you legally become an adult. In Oregon, this happens when you turn 18, get married or are legally emancipated. You have several informal and formal (requiring legal representation) options to consider as you and your family prepare for this milestone. In this section, we provide general information regarding your options with links to other resources.

## The transfer of parental rights

The transfer of parental rights is required in the IDEA. Your school district must provide notice of this transfer a year before your 18th birthday. Beginning at least one year before you turn 18, the school district must:

- Provide you with a copy of the ODE Notice of Procedural Safeguards at the IEP meeting closest to your 17th birthday;
- Inform you that special education rights will transfer from your parents to you when you turn age 18;
- Write a statement in your IEP that you and your family have been informed of the transfer of parental rights.

At age 18, you are no longer under the legal guardianship of your parent or other adult unless a court has established adult guardianship. When you turn 18, you will receive written notice that your rights have transferred. At that time, you will:

- Become responsible for making decisions about your own education including eligibility, IEP and placement meetings;
- Consent or refuse consent for evaluation or reevaluation, and exercise other special education rights.

Once these rights transfer, parents (except for parents of incarcerated students) must continue to receive notices of meetings and prior written notices of district actions. Parents still have the right to review your school records and file a complaint on your behalf as a concerned citizen. However, your parents may not attend IEP meetings unless you or the school district specifically invites them.

If you and your family are concerned about your ability to make decisions, you have several informal and formal options to consider.

## Informal options to the transfer of rights

Most people do not make important decisions without talking with their parents, friends and others that know them well. You and your family can still work together as critical IEP team members after parental rights transfer to you, the student. The difference will be that you will have final decision-making authority. Below are a couple strategies to consider.

- **Actively participate in your IEP meetings.** Consider participating in or leading your IEP meetings. This will help you develop critical self-determination skills. You can use these skills throughout adulthood. Section 2 includes information and resources about self-determination skills and student-led IEPs.
- **Make a written request to keep your parents involved.** Write a letter to your school district administrator saying you want your parents to keep participating in all IEP meetings and discussions about your school and work goals. Ask the school district to insert the letter in your permanent file. Parents are usually involved in their children's lives well beyond high school; they can continue to advocate for and support you in your goals during IEP meetings and in other parts of your life.



## Formal options to the transfer of rights

Several legal options exist for you and your parents if you think you will need more support. We have included several options below with links to more resources. It is important to talk with an attorney experienced in guardianship and alternatives when considering these options.

### Surrogate parent

Students who are wards of the state or whose biological parents are not available can request a surrogate parent from the school district. This person will represent the student in all special education matters and make educational decisions as part of the student's IEP team. This person must be willing to accept the responsibility of being a surrogate parent. He or she must have the necessary knowledge and skills to protect the student's rights. The surrogate cannot be an employee of the school district, Oregon Department of Education or a state agency involved in the student's education or care. A surrogate must also not have a conflict of interest that would interfere with representing the student's best interests.

### Guardianship

Guardianship is the formal process where a judge appoints another person, called a guardian, to act on behalf of an "incapacitated" person. Oregon law requires that guardians encourage maximum independence for the person. Always consult an attorney if you have questions about guardianship.

A judge orders a guardian for a protected person if evidence shows three things:

- The person is incapacitated, which means he or she cannot make decisions well enough to get health care, food or shelter, or to avoid serious injury.
- A guardian is necessary to oversee the care and supervision of the person.
- The guardian is qualified, suitable and willing to serve.

### Conservatorship

Conservatorship is similar to guardianship in Oregon, except that a conservator only makes decisions about the person's money or property. A judge orders a conservator if evidence shows that a person cannot manage his or her money or has money or property that requires management or protection.

### Power of attorney

A power of attorney is a legal document that allows a person to give another person (called an "agent") the right to act on the person's behalf about financial decisions only. The power of attorney can give the agent limited authority, like over a bank account; or broad authority, like over a person's entire collection of assets (including bank accounts, property or estate).

Powers of attorney can be written to go into effect right away, even when the person giving the authority to the agent still has full capacity. They can also be written to take effect only when the person becomes incapacitated. A power of attorney can be revoked in writing if the person still has capacity.

### Representative payee

A representative payee is a person who can only manage the person's government benefits like SSI or SSDI payments (Section 8). People that need help managing other parts of their lives may establish another decision-making authority like a power of attorney.

Several other types of legal decision-making relationships can protect a person's well-being. The booklet "Options in Oregon to Help Another Person Make Decisions" has more helpful information.



## Resources

**ODE K-12 procedural safeguards**

[www.ode.state.or.us/wma/pubs/proceduralsafeguards/k21/englishk21.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/wma/pubs/proceduralsafeguards/k21/englishk21.pdf)

**Oregon State Bar (for help to find an attorney)**

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

**Guardianship Handbook: Protective Proceedings for Adults**

<http://droregon.org/wp-content/uploads/Guardianship-Handbook-Third-Edition.pdf>

**Managing Someone Else's Money: Help for court-appointed guardians of property and conservators**

[http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201310\\_cfpb\\_lay\\_fiduciary\\_guides\\_guardians.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201310_cfpb_lay_fiduciary_guides_guardians.pdf)

**Managing Someone Else's Money: Help for agents under a power of attorney**

[http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201310\\_cfpb\\_lay\\_fiduciary\\_guides\\_agents.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201310_cfpb_lay_fiduciary_guides_agents.pdf)

**Managing Someone Else's Money: Help for representative payees and VA fiduciaries**

[http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201310\\_cfpb\\_lay\\_fiduciary\\_guides\\_representative.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201310_cfpb_lay_fiduciary_guides_representative.pdf)

**Options in Oregon to Help Another Person Make Decisions**

[http://ocdd.org/doc\\_downloads/Guardianship\\_and\\_other\\_options\\_booklet.pdf](http://ocdd.org/doc_downloads/Guardianship_and_other_options_booklet.pdf)

# Section 10: Housing and other resources

## Section overview

- Facilitated person-controlled housing and asset planning
- Individualized housing resources
- Individual development accounts
- Transportation
- Centers for independent living
- Resources

Housing, transportation and other resources help you access the greater community where people live, work, play and learn. This section describes a personalized approach to planning your housing options. It has information on several state and federally funded housing resources for renting and owning a home of your own. You will also find information on building assets, transportation options and independent living centers to help you access community life.

## Facilitated person-controlled housing and asset planning

The facilitated person-controlled housing and asset planning process helps you discover housing options that suit your dreams and goals. It also helps you develop strategies to help you reach them. This process is based on a common set of principles.

All people deserve chances to:

- Acquire assets (like a home) to avoid a lifetime of poverty;
- Control their own living space as a leaseholder or home owner;
- Create a safe and comfortable home adapted to suit their needs; and
- Live a self-determined life in their community with access to work, transportation, businesses, relationships and a rich community life.

Housing practices for people with disabilities have focused primarily on group housing models. In these settings, people live in homes owned by someone else (like group homes or adult foster homes) with roommates they do not choose. If you and your family are not comfortable with these options or with you living in your family home long-term, you can learn how to rent or own a home of your own. The housing field has many rental, home ownership and asset-building programs to rent or own a home of your own. Below are considerations for planning to rent or own your own home.

## Your housing profile

Think about the type of home you want and answer the following questions:

- What type or style of housing or apartment would you prefer?
- What look would you like your house to have?
- Would you like to live alone or with others?
- Where would you like to live (i.e., what neighborhood or part of town)?
- What home adaptations (i.e., a ramp or roll-in shower) do you need?

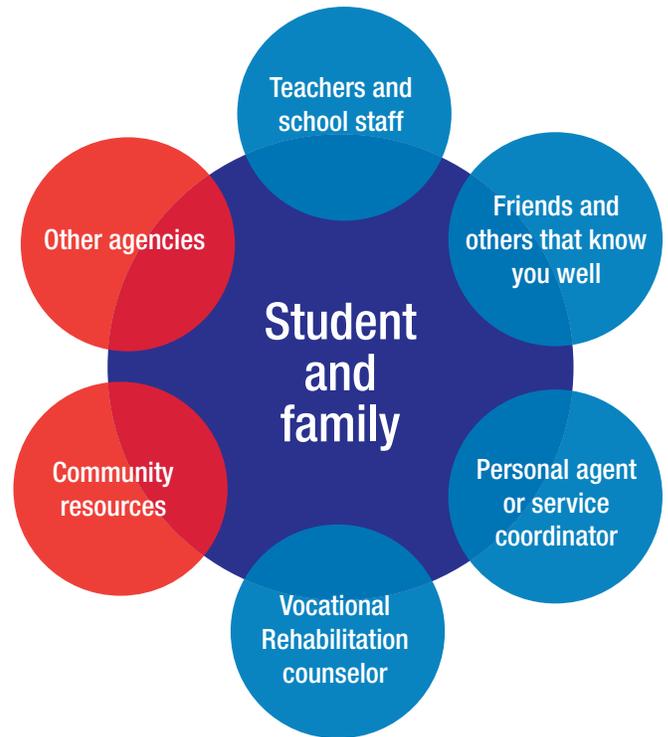


Figure 1d. Your transition planning team

## Section 10: Housing and other resources



### Your financial profile

Consider your financial resources and explore rental or home purchase programs.

- How much can you afford to pay for rent or a mortgage?
- Do you have a current checking or savings account?
- Do you have history of credit? If so, what is your credit score?
- Do you have a personal needs trust or other savings?

### Your resource profile

Think about where you might find resources to assist you in developing housing possibilities.

- Who might help you find your home?
- What housing-related organizations are in your community?
- What other local organizations might help?

Answering these questions will help you explore housing options that address your interests and resources. See the resources described below. Keep in mind that you can combine these resources to reach your housing goals.

## Individualized housing resources

Enormous support, encouragement and expertise are available to address the housing needs of people with disabilities. Housing professionals understand that most people — including people with disabilities — want their own homes and that assets are crucial to attaining both financial and personal well-being. The following resources are available:

### The Housing and Urban Development Agency

The mission of the federal Housing and Urban Development Agency (HUD) is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all, including people with disabilities. One of the agency's goals is to use housing to improve quality of life. HUD has several programs for people with low incomes, including some listed below.

#### Rental resources

**Community development corporations** or CDCs are community-based nonprofit groups that provide affordable housing and other services like building programs and home ownership training.

**Medicaid Title 19** provides matching funds for rent and utility payments if an individual with a disability finds a roommate without a disability.

**The Housing Choice Voucher** is a HUD program for very low-income families, the elderly and people with disabilities. The program helps them rent decent, safe and sanitary housing. This includes single-family homes, townhouses and apartments.

**Section 811** is another HUD program that allows people with disabilities to live as independently as possible. The program pays some costs to develop rental housing. This allows property owners to set aside housing units for people that are at a certain income level.

#### Homeownership resources

**The Federal Home Loan Bank** (FHLB) provides funds to member banks to make loans. This program benefits low- and moderate-income individuals. If you buy a home with one of these loans, and live in the home for a five-year period, you will not have to pay it back.

**HOME Funds** is a HUD program that provides funds for first-time homebuyer programs to increase homeownership. These funds can also be used to repair existing homes or build new ones.

**Community Development Block Grant Funds** (CDBG) are federal grants to city, county and state governments. Funds can be used to make homes more accessible. Sometimes, a person can access up to \$15,000.

**Oregon Housing and Community Services** (OHCS) works in partnership with participating lenders, local governments and nonprofit organizations. The goal is to help first-time homebuyers secure home loans and access homebuyer education and counseling. Sometimes very low interest rates or small grants are available.

**Community development corporations** (CDC) provide low-cost first-time homebuyer opportunities through projects they create and build.

As previously noted, **Medicaid Title 19** provides matching funds for mortgage payments if the individual with a disability has a roommate without a disability.

## Other housing resources

The **Fair Housing Council of Oregon** (FHCO) is a nonprofit civil rights organization that advocates for people that experience housing discrimination. FHCO promotes equal access to housing by educating and giving outreach, technical assistance and enforcement opportunities related to federal, state and local fair housing laws. These laws protect against illegal discrimination.

## Individual development accounts

Individual development accounts (IDAs) provide another way for people at a certain income level to save money for home ownership and other goals. These accounts are especially important for people with disabilities. The Social Security Administration recognizes these accounts as an allowable resource. The IDA program is a safe way to save while keeping your federal and state benefits.

The IDA program offers a jointly held bank account with funds that match personal savings contributions three to one. For example, if you contribute \$25 to your savings, this will be matched three to one for an additional \$75 — a total of \$100 in savings. The IDA program will match funds for six to 36 months, helping you achieve goals related to:

- Home ownership;
- Small business startup or expansion;
- Education after high school;
- Home repair and rehabilitation; and
- Need-based adaptive and specialized equipment.

Community Vision, Inc. (CVI) is one of several organizations around the state that coordinates an IDA program called Future Assets for Independence. CVI is Oregon's largest nonprofit organization providing individualized housing, supported living, employment and home ownership services to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

## What is asset building?

Assets are concrete resources like a home, savings, an education or a business.

Asset building refers to strategies that help a person increase assets over time. Building assets is important.

Research shows that income — by itself — is not enough to help people escape poverty, achieve financial stability and move up the economic ladder.

•••  
**Laura wanted her own house and the feeling of security it would bring. However, living on Social Security benefits and a small income from a part-time job did not give her the resources she needed for a down payment.**

•••  
**Laura signed up for the IDA, saving what she could for three years, often no more than \$25 per month. With the help of the IDA 3:1 match, Laura was able to save enough money for a down payment of \$4,900 and buy a home valued at \$140,000.**

## Section 10: Housing and other resources



To qualify for an IDA, you must:

- Be at least 12 years old;
- Earn less than 80 percent of the area median income for your county according to family size;
- Have a net worth of less than \$20,000; and
- Attend financial planning sessions and be ready to plan for your savings goal.

To learn more about the IDA program or for assistance with the application process, email [IDA@cvision.org](mailto:IDA@cvision.org) or call **503-858-0678** or **503-292-4964 x116**. There is a \$60 application fee. Most applications take six weeks to process.

## Transportation

Affordable and reliable transportation is necessary to access important opportunities in your community including education, work, housing and other aspects of community life. Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), public transit vehicles and facilities must be accessible to everyone. Additionally, public transit operators must provide paratransit (on-demand, door-to-door) services for those that cannot use available mass transit.

The **Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Travel Oregon website** is an excellent resource for discovering several public transportation and paratransit options throughout the state:

- Central Oregon — Cascades East Transit;
- Corvallis — Corvallis Transit System;
- Eastern Oregon — Neotransit and Snake River;
- Eugene — Lane Transit District and Amtrak;
- Portland — Trimet and Amtrak;
- Southern Oregon — Rogue Valley and Basin Transit; and
- Salem — Cherriots and Amtrak.

Additionally, Oregon's public transit systems offer ride training and reduced-fare options for people with disabilities. Members of your planning team will help you connect to transportation resources in your local community. You can also contact your local public transportation office for additional information on specific programs for people with disabilities.

### Other transportation options

**Drive Less Connect** is an easy-to-use online ride-matching tool. It matches you with other commuters living and working in Oregon that travel similar routes. The program is free and you do not need a car to access it. Regional administrators connect you to local networks of ride share users in your area.

**Driving.** In rural areas, many people drive from place to place because public transportation is limited or not available. Adaptive devices and driver education programs for drivers with disabilities are available through the Oregon Driver Education Center. You do not have to disclose your disability when getting your permit or taking your driver's test unless you have a medical condition that could affect your ability to stay conscious on the road.

**Adaptations for vehicles** exist for people with physical impairments that prevent them from operating the steering wheel, brakes or gas pedals on a standard car. The number of adaptive devices grows daily as people learn how to meet their driving needs. Your VR counselor may authorize funding for driver's education and vehicle adaptations if driving is part of your employment goal.

## Centers for independent living

Centers for independent living (CILs) are community-based, cross-disability, nonprofit organizations designed and led by people with disabilities. There are currently seven CILs throughout Oregon. CILs uniquely operate according to a strict



philosophy of “consumer control.” This means people with all types of disabilities run the organization. Additionally, CIL services are based on the idea that people with disabilities should control how they live, work and participate in their communities. CILs provide several services, including:

- Peer support;
- Information and referral;
- Individual and systems advocacy;
- Independent living skills training; and
- A variety of other services, often specific to the CIL and service area needs.

For youth transitioning from school to work, CILs can bridge school and adult services in the community. CILs empower people with disabilities through peer support. Peers serve as role models, demonstrating that people with disabilities have valued roles in the community. Center employees work alongside other people with disabilities to advocate for and educate about equality and justice for people with disabilities. CILs also connect people with disabilities to other local resources.

## Resources

### **Housing and Urban Development Agency (HUD)**

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD>

### **Community Development Corporations**

[http://oregonon.org/about\\_us/about-oregon-on-and-community-development-in-oregon](http://oregonon.org/about_us/about-oregon-on-and-community-development-in-oregon)

### **Housing Choice Voucher Fact Sheet**

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact\\_sheet](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet)

### **Project-Based Vouchers**

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/project](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/project)

### **Section 811**

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/housing/mfh/progdesc/disab811](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/mfh/progdesc/disab811)

### **Federal Home Loan Bank**

[www.fhlbanks.com](http://www.fhlbanks.com)

### **HOME Funds**

[www.hudexchange.info/home/home-overview](http://www.hudexchange.info/home/home-overview)

### **Community Development Block Grants**

[www.hudexchange.info/onecpd/assets/File/The-Community-Development-Block-Grant-FAQ.pdf](http://www.hudexchange.info/onecpd/assets/File/The-Community-Development-Block-Grant-FAQ.pdf)

### **Oregon Housing and Community Services**

[www.oregon.gov/OHCS/pages/index.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/OHCS/pages/index.aspx)

### **Oregon Opportunity Network (a Community Development Corporation)**

[http://oregonon.org/about\\_us/about-oregon-on-and-community-development-in-oregon](http://oregonon.org/about_us/about-oregon-on-and-community-development-in-oregon)

### **Fair Housing Council of Oregon**

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

### **Community Vision, Inc. Future Assets for Independence IDA program**

<http://cvision.org/our-programs/future-assets-for-independence>

### **ODOT Travel Oregon Public Transportation Guide**

<http://traveloregon.com/getting-around/public-transit>

### **Oregon Driver Education Center**

<http://www.drivereeducationcenter.com>

### **Disabled World website**

[www.disabled-world.com/assistivedevices/automotive](http://www.disabled-world.com/assistivedevices/automotive)

### **Oregon CIL Directory**

<http://nwsds.org/content/Links/Oregon%20CIL%20Directory.pdf>



# Appendix

- A. Adult services and eligibility
- B. Transition team contacts
- C. Transition planning communication record
- D. Annual transition planning survey
- E. Transition goal action plan

## A. Adult services and eligibility

Youth, families and transition teams should explore a variety of agencies to determine which agencies can offer support, services and resources to help you plan your way to work. In most cases, whether an agency can help will be determined by its eligibility criteria and services. Your work and adult life goals also matter.

As you begin to explore agencies with your transition team, keep these criteria in mind. This will help you prepare information the agencies may need. The information in the table below may help you and your team to start talking about your eligibility for the programs and extent and types of services they offer.

The types of eligibility criteria often considered by agencies include:

**Age:** Services may only be available if you are a certain age. Some agencies require you to be age 14 or older while others can work with you if you are age 18 or older.

**Disability:** Some agencies require a formal disability diagnosis to find out if the agency can serve your disability.

**Challenges and limitations:** Agencies may require proof of the challenges your disability causes and how they affect your ability to learn, work, be safe, care for your personal needs and participate in daily life.

**Level of need:** Agencies may have limited resources and will prioritize people with the greatest need to receive services before those whose needs are less critical.

**Type of need:** The type of service you need may only be available through certain agencies or providers.

**Financial:** Some resources are only available to people with limited income. In some cases, you may not be eligible for resources or supports because your or your family's income is above the allowed limit.

**Availability:** Some services or resources may be limited and require people to be placed on waiting lists.

**Residence:** Some agency service providers may only serve specific geographic areas of the state or only provide group housing options.

**Your goals:** Your goals can determine which agency should provide services or if an agency should provide a service. When contacting agencies, be sure to tell them about your work and adult life goals. This will help find services that suit you and your vision for the future.

## A. Adult services and eligibility, cont.

**Agency overview: eligibility.** The types of agency eligibility criteria may include age, disability status, challenges, level and type of support needs, financial status, availability of services and individual goals. Below is a summary of the eligibility criteria for agencies that may help you transition from school to work and adult life.

<b>Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS)</b>	<b>Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)</b>	<b>Social Security Administration (SSA)</b>	<b>Employed Persons with Disabilities (EPD)</b>
<p>ODDS offers Medicaid services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.</p> <p>Who is eligible:</p> <p>You may be eligible for ODDS services if you are a person with an intellectual or developmental disability whose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability causes impairments in everyday living skills like walking and communicating; and</li> <li>• Impairments are not primarily caused by mental disorder, sensory impairment, motor impairment, personality disorder, substance abuse, learning disability or ADHD.</li> </ul> <p>Your local community developmental disability program (CDDP) determines if you are eligible. The CDDP must decide this within 10 days of receiving your completed application.</p> <p>After eligibility, you will learn about service and case management options. You can choose case management with a CDDP service coordinator (SC) or a supports services brokerage personal agent (PA).</p> <p>Your SC or PA will conduct a needs assessment to identify your needs, goals and service levels.</p> <p>Within 45 days of your assessment, your SC or PA will contact you with results.</p> <p>You and your team will develop an individual support plan (ISP) by talking about your needs, goals, preferences and assessment results. The ISP outlines the services you will receive over the next year to meet your goals.</p>	<p>VR provides employment services to help people with all kinds of disabilities get and keep a job.</p> <p>Who is eligible:</p> <p>Transition students (age 14+) and adults with disabilities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to work in the general work force;</li> <li>• Receive SSI or SSDI;</li> <li>• Have a disability;</li> <li>• Have a barrier to employment because of disability; and</li> <li>• Need help to get or keep a job.</li> </ul> <p>VR services must be focused on finding a competitive job.</p> <p>You and your VR counselor work together to identify an employment goal that suits you.</p>	<p>The Social Security Administration (SSA) manages two different disability-based benefit programs — SSI and SSDI.</p> <p>Who is eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSI (Supplemental Security Income) is a financial support for people with low income and few resources. They must also have a disability or be elderly.</li> <li>• SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance) is a financial support based on past work history. SSDI may be available to people with a disability who need help to get a job.</li> </ul> <p>In general, a qualified medical examiner must document an adult's (age 18+) disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The disability must be expected to last more than 12 months. The person either cannot be working at the time of application or earn less than a certain income level to be eligible.</li> </ul>	<p>Employed Persons with Disabilities (EPD) is a Medicaid health care program for people with all kinds of disabilities.</p> <p>Who is eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It provides health care coverage and long-term services to working Oregonians whose income may exceed established limits set for Medicaid eligibility.</li> <li>• You may be eligible for EPD if you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a physical, cognitive, mental health or developmental disability, or you are legally blind;</li> <li>• Are employed and receiving a taxable wage or are self-employed;</li> <li>• Have countable resources of \$5,000 or less; and</li> <li>• Have earned income of no more than 250% of the federal poverty level for a family of one after allowed deductions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## A. Adult services and eligibility, cont.

**Agency overview: services.** Agencies may provide a wide range of services to help you transition from school to work and adult life. The type, intensity and availability of service may vary for different people.

Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS)	Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)	Social Security Administration (SSA)	Employed Persons with Disabilities (EPD)
<p>Service options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support with everyday activities like bathing, dressing, managing your money, communication and behavior challenges;</li> <li>• Supports in your community like transportation, help with shopping, social groups and activities;</li> <li>• Skills training to help you learn everyday activities at home or in your community;</li> <li>• Supports in the community or a facility to learn basic job skills and reach a job goal;</li> <li>• Help to develop job interests, skills and keep a job through discovery, small group employment and job coaching;</li> <li>• Assistive technology or devices;</li> <li>• Home or vehicle modifications;</li> <li>• Relief (respite) care; and</li> <li>• Training for family members to help them support you.</li> </ul> <p>You may receive services in your own home, your family home, a group home or foster home and around your community.</p>	<p>Service options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to get a job through counseling, planning, employment assessments, training, connection to employment specialists or job developers;</li> <li>• Help to attend a college or vocational training program;</li> <li>• Equipment or adaptive technology to help you on the job;</li> <li>• Career guidance to help you move up in your job or get a better job; and</li> <li>• Benefits counseling to help you understand how work may affect your SSI and Medicaid benefits.</li> </ul> <p>VR works in partnerships with other agencies to provide services other than vocational guidance and counseling — like job discovery, job development and job coaching.</p>	<p>Service options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSI includes Medicaid eligibility and a monthly cash benefit that may be as much as \$733 per month. Think of Medicaid as health insurance.</li> <li>• The SSDI cash benefit amount depends on past work history.</li> <li>• People on SSDI will eventually receive Medicare coverage. Think of Medicare as another health insurance program for people who qualify.</li> <li>• Work incentives make it possible for people who receive disability benefits to work without losing their benefits until they earn enough income to support themselves.</li> <li>• There are different work incentive rules for SSI and SSDI. Both programs allow a person time to earn income without losing cash benefits and Medicaid.</li> <li>• SSA works with employment networks to provide incentives to employ individuals with disabilities through the Ticket to Work program.</li> <li>• SSA supports benefits counseling through Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) agencies to help individuals understand the programs.</li> </ul>	<p>Service options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPD provides Medicaid health care coverage to people that buy in to the program. That means people in EPD pay small monthly health care premiums based on income. Medicaid funds EPD.</li> </ul>



## B. Transition Team Contacts

SCHOOL	
PRIMARY CONTACT	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
FAX	
ADDRESS	
WEBSITE	

COUNTY DD SERVICES	
PRIMARY CONTACT	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
FAX	
ADDRESS	
WEBSITE	

BROKERAGE SERVICES	
PRIMARY CONTACT	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
FAX	
ADDRESS	
WEBSITE	

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION	
PRIMARY CONTACT	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
FAX	
ADDRESS	
WEBSITE	



## B. Transition Team Contacts, cont.

EMPLOYER	
PRIMARY CONTACT	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
FAX	
ADDRESS	
WEBSITE	

JOB COACH/JOB DEVELOPER	
PRIMARY CONTACT	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
FAX	
ADDRESS	
WEBSITE	

OTHER	
PRIMARY CONTACT	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
FAX	
ADDRESS	
WEBSITE	

OTHER	
PRIMARY CONTACT	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
FAX	
ADDRESS	
WEBSITE	



## C. Transition Planning Communication Record

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
RESULT:	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
RESULT:	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
RESULT:	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
RESULT:	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
RESULT:	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
RESULT:	



## C. Transition Planning Communication Record, cont.

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
<b>RESULT:</b>	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
<b>RESULT:</b>	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
<b>RESULT:</b>	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
<b>RESULT:</b>	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
<b>RESULT:</b>	

<b>DATE AND TIME</b>	
<b>NAME/TITLE</b>	
<b>RESULT:</b>	

## D. Annual Transition Planning Survey

Student (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Survey completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Student  Family member  Educator  Service coordinator  Caregiver  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's age: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's grade level: \_\_\_\_\_

STRENGTHS	INTERESTS	SKILLS
WHAT WORKS	WHAT DOESN'T WORK	QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

## D. Annual Transition Planning Survey, cont

### Vision for the future

<b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b> College, trade school, military, etc.	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b> Paid work, self-employment, etc.	<b>COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION</b> Clubs, volunteer work, civics, etc.
<b>LIVING ARRANGEMENTS</b> Where and with whom	<b>HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES</b> Meal planning, cooking, cleaning, etc.	<b>LEISURE ACTIVITIES</b> Hobbies, sports, recreation, etc.
<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> Family, friends, intimacy, etc.	<b>COMMUNICATION</b> Speech, text, email, devices, etc.	<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS</b> Medical, hygiene, fitness, nutrition, etc.

### D. Annual Transition Planning Survey, cont.

EMPOWERMENT Self advocacy, traditions, faith, etc.	FINANCES & SHOPPING Banking, budgeting, etc.	TRANSPORTATION Public transit, driving, routes, etc.

### Action steps

SUGGESTED GOALS	REFERRALS	SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

### Additional notes:

## E. Transition Goal Action Plan

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ School year: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired result(s) for this goal: \_\_\_\_\_

How will you measure the result(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Organize and schedule the family and community involvement activities to support this goal**

ACTIVITIES	DATES	ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE

**Any extra funds or resources, supplies or resources needed for these activities?**





# Requesting copies of “Planning My Way to Work”

“Planning My Way to Work” is a guide for students with disabilities and their families to help you navigate services and community resources on your path from school to work.

## Looking for an electronic copy?

You can find electronic copies on the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities website: <http://tinyurl.com/planningmyway>. You can download the entire manual, or only download sections that interest you.

This publication will soon be available for download in Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese.

## Looking for printed copies?

You can request printed copies in English, Spanish, Russian or Vietnamese by contacting OCDD at 503-945-9941 or [ocdd@ocdd.org](mailto:ocdd@ocdd.org).

You can also request copies by completing the online order form: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/Planning\\_My\\_Way\\_to\\_Work](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Planning_My_Way_to_Work).

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