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A Transition Guide

To Postsecondary Education and Employment For Students and Youth With Disabilities

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
United States Department of Education

An updated *Transition Guide* can be found at:
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/transition/products/postsecondary-transition-guide-may-2017.pdf

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Sue Swenson
Deputy Assistant Secretary,
delegated the authority to perform the
functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary

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January 2017

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All examples were prepared by American Institutes for Research under contract to the Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) with information provided by grantees and others. The examples provided in this Guide do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department. The Department has not independently verified the content of these examples and does not guarantee accuracy or completeness. Not all of the activities described in the examples are necessarily funded under Parts B or D of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (*IDEA)* or the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*. The inclusion of the information in these examples is not intended to reflect a determination by the Department that the practices are effective or that any activity, product, program, intervention, model, or service mentioned may be supported with *IDEA* or *Rehabilitation Act* funds. The inclusion of these examples is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as an endorsement of any views, organization, product, or program by the Department or the U.S. Government.

This Guide addresses provisions authorized under both Titles I, V, and VI of the *Rehabilitation Act*. The references to the *Rehabilitation Act* in this Guide, including the examples, refer primarily to Title I of the *Rehabilitation Act*. This *Guide* also makes reference to Section 504, which is part of Title V of the *Rehabilitation Act* and addresses nondiscrimination rather than the authorization of programs administered by the State Vocational Rehabilitation agency.

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PREFACE

Dear Students, Youth, and Families,

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), of the U.S. Department of Education (Department), is pleased to publish, *A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities.* OSERS' mission is to improve early childhood, educational, and employment outcomes and raise expectations for all individuals with disabilities, their families, their communities, and the nation. To assist students and youth with disabilities to achieve their post-school and career goals, Congress enacted two key statutes that address the provision of transition services: the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (*IDEA)* and the *Rehabilitation Act* of 1973 (*Rehabilitation Act*), as amended by Title IV of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*. The *IDEA* is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and Titles I, III and VI, section 509, and chapter 2 of Title VII of the *Rehabilitation Act* are administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). OSEP and RSA, both components of OSERS, provide oversight and guidance regarding the administration and provision of transition services by State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies.

Both the *IDEA* and the *Rehabilitation Act* make clear that transition services require a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability within an outcome-oriented process. This process promotes movement from school to post-school activities, such as postsecondary education, and includes vocational training, and competitive integrated employment. Active student involvement, family engagement, and cooperative implementation of transition activities, as well as coordination and collaboration between the VR agency, the SEA, and the LEAs are essential to the creation of a process that results in no undue delay or disruption in service delivery. The student's transition from school to post-school activities is a shared responsibility.

OSERS presents this transition guide to advance our efforts in ensuring that all students and youth with disabilities are equipped with the skills and knowledge to be engaged in the 21st Century workforce. In doing so, OSERS recognizes the significance of collaborative partnerships and hopes that the information in this guide will assist families and their students and youth with disabilities in developing and pursuing their goals for adult life.

This transition guide addresses the following topics to facilitate a seamless transition from school to post-school activities:

- Transition planning: opportunities and programs;
- Transition services and requirements, as authorized by *IDEA* and the *Rehabilitation Act*;
- Education and employment options for students and youth with disabilities after leaving secondary school; and
- Supporting decisions made by students and youth with disabilities.

This guide also includes "real life" examples, a sample flow chart of the transition process, and a glossary of key terms used in the transition process.

As students and youth with disabilities prepare to transition to adult life, we must do everything we can to provide them with the information, services, and supports they need to ensure that they have the opportunity to achieve their goals. We hope this transition guide will also help students and youth with disabilities and their families to better understand how the SEA, the LEA, and the VR agency work together to facilitate improved outcomes for students and youth with disabilities. If you have questions about this Transition Resource Guide, please submit them to **TRGuideQuestions@ed.gov.**

Sincerely,

Sue Swenson
Deputy Assistant Secretary,
delegated the authority to perform the
functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for the
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Janet L. LaBreck
Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration

Ruth E. Ryder
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

1. Transition Planning: Opportunities and Programs to Prepare Students with Disabilities for Success

Overview

As a student approaches the time to leave high school, it is important that preparations for adult life are well underway. For early transition planning and active participation in decision making to occur for students with disabilities, members of the planning team need to be well-informed about the student's abilities, needs, and available services. This section highlights educational opportunities, credentials, and employment strategies designed to assist students with disabilities while in school to prepare for a meaningful postsecondary education and thriving career.

Transition Planning

"A truly successful transition process is the result of comprehensive team planning that is driven by the dreams, desires and abilities of youth. A transition plan provides the basic structure for preparing an individual to live, work and play in the community, as fully and independently as possible."[1]

Local educational agencies (LEAs) and State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies participate in planning meetings to assist students and family members to make critical decisions about this stage of the student's life and his or her future post-school goals. During the planning process, schools and VR agencies work together to identify the transition needs of students with disabilities, such as the need for assistive or rehabilitation technology, orientation and mobility services or travel training, and career exploration through vocational assessments or work experience opportunities.

The individualized education program (IEP), developed under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),* for each student with a disability must address transition services requirements beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and must be updated annually thereafter. The IEP must include:

(1) appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and

(2) the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the student with a disability in reaching those goals).

While the *IDEA* statute and regulations refer to courses of study, they are but one example of appropriate transition services. Examples of independent living skills to consider when developing postsecondary goals include self-advocacy, management of the home and personal finances, and the use of public information.

Education and Training Opportunities

There are a number of opportunities and programs available for students preparing to exit secondary school. Many of these education and training opportunities involve formal or informal connections between educational, VR, employment, training, social services, and health services agencies. Specifically, high schools, career centers, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and State technical colleges are key partners. These partners offer Federal, State, and local funds to assist a student preparing for postsecondary education.

Further, research suggests that enrollment in more rigorous, academically intense programs (e.g., Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment) in high school prepares students, including those with low achievement levels, to enroll and persist in postsecondary education at higher rates than similar students who pursue less challenging courses of study.[2]

The following are examples of exiting options, programs and activities that may be available as IEP Teams develop IEPs to prepare the student for the transition to adult life:

Regular High School Diploma

The term "regular high school diploma:"

(A) means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma, except that a regular high school diploma shall not be aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards; and

(B) does not include a recognized equivalent of a diploma, such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential, such as a diploma based on meeting IEP goals.

The vast majority of students with disabilities should have access to the same high-quality academic coursework as all other students in the State that reflects grade-level content for the grade in which the student is enrolled and that provides for assessment against grade-level achievement standards.

Alternate High School Diploma

Some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be awarded a State-defined alternate high school diploma based on alternate academic achievement standards, but that diploma must be standards-based. See the definition of alternate diploma in the **Glossary of Terms** (Glossary).

Working towards an alternate diploma sometimes causes delay or keeps the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma. However, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are working towards an alternate diploma must receive instruction that promotes their involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, consistent with the *IDEA*.

Further, States must continue to make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to any student with a disability who graduates from high school with a credential other than a regular high school diploma, such as an alternate diploma, GED, or certificate of completion, or a diploma based on meeting IEP goals. While FAPE under the *IDEA* does not include education beyond grade 12, States and school

districts are required to continue to offer to develop and implement an IEP for a student with a disability who graduates from high school with a credential other than a regular high school diploma until the student has exceeded the age of eligibility for FAPE under State law, or has been evaluated and determined to no longer be a child with a disability under *IDEA*. Depending on State law which sets the State's upper age limit of FAPE, the entitlement to FAPE of a student with a disability who has not graduated high school with a regular high school diploma could last until the student's 22nd birthday. IEPs could include transition services in the form of coursework at a community college or other postsecondary institution, provided that the State recognizes the coursework as secondary school education under State law. Secondary school education does not include education that is beyond grade 12 and must meet State education standards. See the definition of "secondary school" in the Glossary.

Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Program

Increasingly, States and school districts are permitting students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs while still in high school. The term "dual or concurrent enrollment program" refers to a partnership between at least one college or university and at least one local school district in which the student who has not yet graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma is able to enroll in one or more postsecondary courses and earn postsecondary credit. The credit(s) can be transferred to the college or university in the partnership, and applied toward completion of a degree or recognized educational credential, which the student would earn after leaving high school. Programs are offered both on campuses of colleges or universities, or in high school classrooms. Examples of dual or concurrent enrollment programs include institution-specific dual enrollment programs, AP, IB, and statewide dual enrollment programs with an emphasis on implementation at one site. The Office of Special Education Programs has stated in prior policy guidance that, if under State law, attending classes at a postsecondary institution, whether auditing or for credit, is considered secondary school education for students in grade 12 or below and the education provided meets applicable State standards, those services can be designated as transition services on a student's IEP and paid for with *IDEA* Part B funds, consistent with the student's entitlement to FAPE.[3]

Early College High School

The term "early college high school" refers to a partnership between at least one school district and at least one college or university that allows a student to simultaneously complete requirements toward earning a regular high school diploma and earn not less than 12 credits that are transferable to the college or university within the partnership as part of his or her course of study toward a postsecondary degree or credential at no cost to the student or student's family.

Summary of Performance

A summary of performance (SOP) is required for each student with an IEP whose eligibility for services under *IDEA* terminates due to graduation from secondary school with a regular high school diploma or due to exceeding the age of eligibility for FAPE under State law. The school district must provide the

student with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance that includes recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting the student's postsecondary goals. This summary of the student's achievement and performance can be used to assist the student in accessing postsecondary education and/or employment services.

Employment Opportunities

Community-Based Work Experiences

Whether the student's next step is employment or entering a postsecondary training or an educational program, it is important for students with disabilities to obtain as much work experience as possible to prepare for adult life. The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD) reports that the value of a work experience, whether paid or unpaid work:

- Helps students acquire jobs at higher wages after they graduate; and
- Promotes students who participate in occupational education and special education in integrated settings to be competitively employed more than students who have not participated in such activities.[4]

NCWD also recommends that a student with a disability participate in multiple work-based learning experiences and those experiences be directly related to the student's education program.[5]

Community-based work experiences, such as internships, apprenticeships, and other on-the-job training experiences, provide increased opportunities for students to learn a specific job, task, or skill at an integrated employment site, and to transfer the knowledge gained to real-time work experiences. Visit: **www.ncwd-youth.info** to learn more about the value of community-based work experiences.

VR agencies provide a variety of community-based work experiences and on-the-job training services to students and youth with disabilities on a case-by-case basis under the VR program. The VR counselor and the student or youth with a disability will identify a specific vocational goal to determine whether a community-based work experience is a necessary service for the student or youth with disability to achieve an employment outcome in competitive integrated employment or supported employment. "Competitive integrated employment" is employment with earnings comparable to those paid to individuals without disabilities in a setting that allows them to interact with individuals who do not have disabilities. "Supported employment" is competitive integrated employment or employment in an integrated work setting in which individuals with the most significant disabilities are working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment, while receiving ongoing support services in order to support and maintain those individuals in employment. See the Glossary for more extensive definitions of these terms.

Community-based work experiences allow the student or youth with a disability to explore potential careers related to the specific vocational goal, potential workplace environments and demands, and other aspects of the work. These experiences offer the student opportunities to gain firsthand knowledge of a particular job skill, or to learn the culture of day-to-day employment. These experiences can be offered in lieu of, or to supplement, vocational training or educational programs, or as a stand-

alone service. To ensure the success of community-based work experiences, VR agencies are encouraged to develop agreements with employers and the student or youth with a disability that describe the training objectives, services to be provided, timelines, and financial responsibilities necessary for a successful community-based work experience.

The following list describes work-based strategies used to enhance competitive integrated employment opportunities for students and youth with disabilities:

Internships

Internships are formal agreements whereby a student or youth is assigned specific tasks in a workplace over a predetermined period of time. Internships can be paid or unpaid, depending on the nature of the agreement with the company and the nature of the tasks.[6]

Internships are usually temporary on-the-job work experiences. They not only provide individuals, including students and youth with disabilities, actual work experience and the opportunity to develop skills, but also the opportunity to determine if the type of work involved is in keeping with the individuals' career interests, abilities and goals. There is no guarantee that an internship will lead to a permanent employment offer. However, VR counselors refer students or youth with a disability to an internship to increase their employment opportunities. The internship experience is frequently enriched by the provision of services or supports, such as transportation and vocational counseling, as described in an approved individualized plan for employment (IPE) under the VR program (for more information on IPEs, see page 16 of this Guide).

Mentorships

A young person with or without a disability may participate in a mentoring relationship to hone his or her occupational skills and work habits. The business community describes mentoring as an employee training system under which a senior or more experienced individual (the mentor) is assigned as an advisor, counselor, or guide to a junior or trainee (mentee). The mentor is responsible for providing support to, and feedback on, the individual in his or her charge. The mentor's area of experience is sought based on his or her career, disability, and history or life experience similar to the mentee or a host of other possibilities. You may learn more about mentoring in the business community at: **www.businessdictionary.com/definition/mentoring.html**.

Many schools, or existing community organizations, such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and centers for independent living, introduce students and youth to older peer or adult mentors who have achieved success in a particular area that is important for the student and youth (for example, employers, college students, recovering substance abusers).[7] Interaction with successful role models with disabilities enhances the disability-related knowledge and self-confidence of students and youth with disabilities, as well as parents' perceptions of the knowledge and capabilities of their students and youth with disabilities.[8]

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are formal, sanctioned work experiences of extended duration in which an apprentice, frequently known as a trainee, learns specific occupational skills related to a standardized trade, such as carpentry, plumbing, or drafting. Many apprenticeships also include paid work components.

In an apprenticeship program, an individual has the opportunity to learn a trade through on-the-job training as well as through related academic knowledge. Often, these programs involve an employer and a community college or university and a trade union. An individual applies for specific training and, once accepted, is able to participate in the apprenticeship program. Employment opportunities are usually offered to an individual who successfully completes the program. VR counselors assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for the apprenticeship application process, develop a plan to gain the pre-requisite knowledge and skills for the trade, and identify support services needed to be successful in the apprenticeship program.

Paid Employment

Paid Employment involves existing standard jobs in a company or customized employment positions that are negotiated with an employer. These jobs always feature a wage paid directly to the student or youth. Such work is scheduled during or after the school day. Paid employment is frequently an integral part of a student's course of study or simply a separate adjunctive experience.[9] Often times, these employment experiences are the first steps towards building a meaningful career for students and youth with disabilities.

Career Pathways[10]

As students and youth with disabilities prepare for their careers, they are counseled to consider and explore a specific career to determine if it meets their career interests, abilities and goals. The Career Pathways model is designed to facilitate an individual's career interest and advancement with multiple entrance and exit points in the individual's career over his or her lifetime. Key program design features of the Career Pathways model include contextualized curricula, integrated basic education and occupational training, career counseling, support services, assessments and credit transfer agreements that ease entry and exit points towards credential attainment.

Career Pathways are also designed as a system strategy for integrating educational instruction, workforce development, and human services, and linking these service delivery systems to labor market trends and employer needs. Career pathways systems use real-time labor market information and active employer involvement to ensure that training and education programs meet the skill and competency needs of local employers. The more the systems are aligned at the State and local levels, the easier it may be to create a level of integration necessary to develop comprehensive programs and ensure an individual's success. You may learn more about career pathways at: **www.ncpn.info/2016-downloads/CP-JointLetterFinal-4-22-2016.pdf**.

Conclusion: Connections help achieve desired careers

Many of the opportunities, programs and strategies discussed in this section involve partnerships between high schools, colleges, VR agencies, employers, American Jobs Centers, workforce development boards, social service agencies, students, and their families to identify and secure a career uniquely suited to the student or youth with a disability. It is essential that students and youth with disabilities, along with family members and professional support staff, examine numerous and challenging programs to prepare students and youth with disabilities for their desired post-school goals.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES AND REQUIREMENTS: *IDEA* AND THE *REHABILITATION ACT*

Overview

Both the school system and VR program provide opportunities designed to prepare students and youth with disabilities for careers in the 21st century workforce.

This section describes services and key requirements of the *IDEA* and the *Rehabilitation Act* that facilitate the transition from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education and competitive integrated employment. These requirements are in place for students and youth with disabilities to seamlessly access services and supports to achieve their career goals. Examples of how States implement transition requirements, descriptions of services for youth with disabilities who are no longer in school, and a sample flow chart of key points in the transition process are also presented.

Transition Services

Transition services are integral to FAPE under *IDEA.* A primary purpose of *IDEA* is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a FAPE that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. As noted earlier in this guide, *IDEA* contains transition services requirements for students with disabilities, which must be addressed in the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16, or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP Team. The *Rehabilitation Act* authorizes a continuum of services, such as pre-employment transition services, transition services, job placement services, other VR services, and supported employment services for students and youth with disabilities, as appropriate, to secure meaningful careers. Implementing regulations for both the schools and the State VR Services program define transition services similarly.

Providing transition services is a shared responsibility between the school and VR agency. The definition of transition services is listed in the Glossary at the end of this guide.

Transition Services for Students under *IDEA*

Schools provide an array of supports and services for *IDEA*-eligible students designed to enable them to be prepared for college or careers. Under *IDEA*, States and school districts must make FAPE available to all eligible children with disabilities in mandatory age ranges. FAPE includes the provision of special education and related services at no cost to the parents in conformity with a properly developed IEP. Each child with a disability must receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and, to the maximum extent appropriate, must be educated with children who do not have disabilities. The LRE requirements apply to transition services, including employment-related transition services, and apply equally to the employment portion of the student's program and placement.[11]

The Individualized Education Program: Postsecondary Goals and Transition Services

The Individualized Education Program

Each student with a disability served under *IDEA,* must have an IEP developed by a Team that includes:

- The parents of a child with a disability;
- Not less than one regular education teacher of such child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment);
- Not less than one special education teacher or, where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of such child;
- A representative of the local educational agency (LEA) who is: qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities; knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the LEA;
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team described above;
- At the discretion of the parent or the agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate; and
- Whenever appropriate, the child with a disability.

Parents are an essential source of information in IEP development and play an important role in the IEP Team to establish the student's goals. There are many resources to assist parents through the IEP and transition process.

Other Agency Representatives at IEP Team Meetings

Representatives of other agencies, such as the VR agency, can be invited to participate at IEP Team meetings in which transition services and postsecondary goals are discussed, if that agency is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for the transition services to be included in the student's IEP. However, *IDEA* requires the consent of the parents or the student who has reached the age of majority under State law to invite other agency representatives to participate in the meeting. See section 4 of this guide for additional information about the age of majority. If a participating agency, other than a public agency, fails to provide the transition services described in the student's IEP, the public agency must reconvene the IEP Team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives for the student.

To meet *IDEA's* transition services provisions, the IEP must contain the services and supports needed to assist the student to gain the skills and experiences to achieve his or her desired post-school goals. By the time the student turns 16, or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, the student's IEP must include:

- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills;
- The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the student in reaching those goals; and
- Age-appropriate transition assessments based on the individual needs of the student to be used to determine appropriate measurable postsecondary goals.

States and school districts are in the best position, along with the student and the student's family member or representative, to determine the most appropriate types of transition assessments based upon a student's needs.[12]

As a student gets older, the IEP Team must consider whether the student's needs have changed, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests; and develop measurable goals that are focused on the student's life after high school, specifying the transition services needed to help him or her reach those goals. We strongly encourage parents to recognize that decisions about the specific content of postsecondary goals and transition services are the responsibility of the IEP Team. These decisions are made at IEP Team meetings, which sometimes include additional school personnel with specific knowledge related to the identified goals and services. Nothing in *IDEA* requires a specific service, placement, or course of study to be included in the student's IEP as a transition service. Rather, *IDEA* leaves such decisions to the IEP Team.

Please note that postsecondary goals and transition services are just one component of a student's IEP. It is also important for the student's other annual IEP goals to complement and address the student's transition service needs, as appropriate. IEP Teams assess the relationship of the student's postsecondary goals to the student's needs in developing other annual IEP goals.

School districts, which are responsible for conducting IEP Team meetings, must:

- Invite the student to an IEP Team meeting if the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the student's postsecondary goals and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals;
- Take steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered, if the student does not attend the meeting;
- Take steps to ensure that the parents are present at IEP Team meetings or are afforded the opportunity to participate;

- Notify parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that parents have an opportunity to attend, and specifically inform them if a purpose of the meeting is consideration of postsecondary goals and transition services for the student;
- Schedule the meeting at a mutually convenient time and place;
- Use other methods to ensure parental participation, including individual or conference telephone calls, if neither parent can attend the meeting; and
- Use alternative means of meeting participation, such as videoconferences and conference calls, if agreed to by the parent and the school district.

Parental and student input is also vital in determining postsecondary goals related to needed postsecondary education and training services for post-school activities, including independent living and employment. Students with disabilities and their parents should be knowledgeable about the range of transition services available, and how to access those services at the local level. School districts should encourage both the student and their parents to be fully engaged in discussions regarding the need for and availability of other services, including application and eligibility for VR services and supports to ensure formal connections with agencies and adult services, as appropriate.

For more information about Parent Information and Training Programs, please visit:

www.parentcenterhub.org

www2.ed.gov/programs/rsaptp

The participation of a VR agency representative on the IEP Team helps to ensure that the vocational- or employment-related provisions in the IEP provide a bridge from the receipt of services provided by secondary schools to the receipt of services provided by VR agencies. Further, recent amendments to the *Rehabilitation Act* authorize the VR agency, along with the school, to provide or arrange for the early provision of pre-employment transition services for all students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. Representation of the VR agency at the IEP meeting fosters the opportunity for pre-employment transition services to be provided early and in keeping with the student's IEP goals.

Students with disabilities, including those eligible under IDEA, have rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits disability discrimination by recipients of Federal financial assistance, including public elementary and secondary schools. Section 504 requires that a free appropriate public education, as defined in the Section 504 regulations, be provided to elementary and secondary students with disabilities through the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet their individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met. Section 504 does not specifically require that eligible students receive transition services as defined in IDEA. However, implementation of an IEP developed in accordance with the IDEA is one means of meeting the Section 504 FAPE standard . More information about Section504 is available at: ***www.ed.gov/ocr***

Transition Services for Students and Youth with Disabilities under the *Rehabilitation Act*

A Continuum of Services

One of the primary roles of State VR agencies is to empower individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities, to make informed choices about their careers by providing a continuum of services to achieve employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment or supported employment. Students and youth with disabilities receive a broad range of services under the VR program, in group settings or on an individual basis, as appropriate. The services available will differ from person to person because they are customized for each individual's needs. Furthermore, certain VR services (e.g., pre-employment transition services) are available to students with disabilities, regardless of whether they have applied for VR services, but are not available to youth with disabilities who do not meet the definition of a "student with a disability" under the *Rehabilitation Act*.

Eligibility Requirements for Services Provided under the VR Program

To be eligible for VR services, an individual must meet the following criteria:

- Have a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and
- Requires VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment.

However, individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits are presumed to be eligible for VR services, unless there is clear and convincing evidence that they are unable to benefit from VR services. These individuals, including students and youth with disabilities, are determined to be eligible for VR services based on existing documentation indicating that the individual is a recipient of SSI and/or SSDI benefits.

Most notably, section 113 of the *Rehabilitation Act* references "potentially eligible" students with disabilities with respect to the provision of pre-employment transition services. In this regard, all students with disabilities, regardless of whether they have applied for or been determined eligible for VR services are considered "potentially eligible" for purposes of receiving pre-employment transition services. The term "potentially eligible" is applicable only with respect to the requirements related to pre-employment transition services. Students with disabilities who need individualized transition services or other VR services beyond the scope of pre-employment transition services must apply and be determined eligible for the VR program, and develop an approved IPE with their VR counselor.

Students with disabilities who receive pre-employment transition services before applying for VR services, and are likely to need other VR services, are encouraged to submit an application as early as possible in the transition planning process. A VR agency is required to implement an order of selection for services when it cannot provide the full range of VR services to all eligible individuals with disabilities who apply for services under the State VR services program. If a State has implemented an order of selection due to limited fiscal or staff resources, the assignment to a priority category under the order of selection to be served is based on the date of application for VR services, not the date of referral or receipt of pre-employment transition services.

In other words, a student's position on a VR agency's waitlist for services is dependent upon applying for VR services. VR agencies that have implemented an order of selection may continue to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who were receiving these services prior to the determination of eligibility and assignment to a closed priority category.

Distinctions between New Terms

"Student with a Disability" and "Youth with a Disability"

The *Rehabilitation Act*, as amended by Title IV of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (*WIOA*), created distinct definitions for the terms "student with a disability" and "youth with a disability." In general, a "student with a disability" is an individual with a disability who is enrolled in an education program; meets certain age requirements; and is eligible for and receiving special education or related services under *IDEA* or is an individual with a disability for purposes of *Section 504*. Educational programs include: secondary education programs; non-traditional or alternative secondary education programs, including home schooling; postsecondary education programs; and other recognized educational programs, such as those offered through the juvenile justice system. Age requirements for a student with a disability include minimum and maximum age requirements. A student cannot be younger than the earliest age to receive transition services under *IDEA*, unless a State elects to provide pre-employment transition services at an earlier age. A student cannot be older than 21, unless State law for the State provides for a higher maximum age for the receipt of services under *IDEA*, then the student cannot be older than that maximum age. A "youth with a disability" is an individual with a disability who is between the ages of 14 and 24 years of age. There is no requirement that a "youth with a disability" be participating in an educational program. The age range for a "youth with a disability" is broader than that for a "student with a disability" under the *Rehabilitation Act*.

As previously discussed, the continuum of services available through the VR program includes: pre-employment transition services that are available only to VR eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities; transition services that are available to groups of students or youth with disabilities, or on an individual basis under an approved IPE; and other VR services that are provided to eligible students and youth with disabilities under an approved IPE.

The definitions of "student with a disability" and "youth with a disability" are listed in the Glossary of this guide.

"Pre-Employment Transition Services" and Individualized Transition Services

"Pre-employment transition services" are offered as an early start at job exploration and are designed to help students with disabilities that are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services identify their career interests. 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) provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy, (including instruction in person-centered planning), which may include peer mentoring.

As noted earlier, pre-employment transition services are only available to "students with disabilities." For students with disabilities who are not enrolled in an education program administered by an LEA, but who are enrolled in other public programs, VR agencies may coordinate the provision of pre-employment transition services for these students with disabilities with the public entities administering those educational programs. Services arranged or provided by the VR agency should be based upon an individual's need and should enrich, not delay, the transition planning process, application to the VR program, and the continuum of services necessary for movement from school to post-school activities.

Although the five distinct pre-employment transition services discussed above are only available to students with disabilities at the earliest stage of this continuum, either in a group setting or on an individual basis, VR agencies may provide transition services—another set of VR services in the continuum of services—to students and youth with disabilities. Some transition services are provided to groups of students and youth with disabilities prior to or after submitting an application for VR services. While these group services are not individualized or specifically related to the individual needs of the student or an approved IPE, they are beneficial and increase the student's opportunities to participate in activities, such as group tours of universities and vocational training programs; employer site visits to learn about career opportunities; and career fairs coordinated with workforce development and employers.

Individualized transition services or other individualized VR services must be provided to students and youth who have been determined eligible for VR services, and the services are described in an approved IPE. Examples of transition services provided in accordance with an approved IPE include travel expenses, vocational and other training services, employment development activities, job search and placement services, and job coaching.

Transition services are outcome-oriented services designed to facilitate the movement from the receipt of services from schools to the receipt of services from VR agencies, and/or as appropriate, other State agencies. Transition services are also designed to facilitate movement towards post-school activities, including postsecondary education and vocational training that lead to employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment or supported employment.

Individualized VR Services

As noted earlier, if a student or youth with a disability needs individualized VR services, the student or youth must apply and be determined eligible for such services and have an approved IPE in place to receive those services. Individualized VR services are any services described in the IPE necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, advancing in, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual.

The VR services provided depend on the student's or youth's individual needs and include, but are not limited to:

- An assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
- Counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the *Rehabilitation Act*;
- Referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed, if such services are not available under the VR program;
- Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
- Transition services for students with disabilities, that facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the IPE;
- Supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities; and
- Services to the family of an individual with a disability necessary to assist the individual to achieve an employment outcome.

The Individualized Plan for Employment Procedures

Once a student or youth is determined eligible for VR services, the student or youth, or his or her representative, develops an IPE. The student or youth, or his or her representative, may seek assistance in the development of the IPE from a qualified VR counselor or another advocate. However, only a qualified VR counselor employed by the VR agency may approve and sign the IPE.

The following IPE requirements facilitate a seamless transition process:

- The IPE is a written document that is agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or the individual's representative;
- The IPE is approved and signed by a qualified VR counselor employed by the VR agency;
- The individual with a disability, including a student or youth, must be given the opportunity to make an informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, needed VR services, providers of those VR services, and related components of the IPE;
- A copy of the IPE must be provided to the individual or individual's representative in writing or appropriate mode of communication;
- The IPE must be reviewed annually by the VR counselor, and amended, as necessary, if there are substantive changes in the components of the IPE; and
- The IPE must be developed no later than 90 days after the date of eligibility determination.

For students with disabilities who receive special education and related services under *IDEA*, the IPE must be developed and approved (i.e., agreed to and signed by the student, or the student's representative, and the VR agency counselor) no later than the time each VR-eligible student leaves the school setting.[13]

Also, the IPE for a student with a disability who receives special education and related services under Part B of *IDEA* or educational services under section 504 must be developed so that it is consistent with and complementary to the student's IEP or plan for section 504 services.

Coordination and Collaboration between State Educational Agency (SEA) and VR Agency

Transition planning and services begin while students are in school. According to fiscal year (FY) 2015 RSA data, of all the individuals with disabilities whose service records were closed and who applied for VR services between age 14 and 24, 52 percent were referred to VR agencies from elementary and secondary schools. Schools and VR agencies have maintained a longstanding relationship to meet the transition needs of students with disabilities.

A VR agency is required to describe in its VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, its plans, policies, and procedures for the coordination between VR and education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services. Under *IDEA*, services are provided at no cost to the

student or his or her family. Under the *Rehabilitation Act*, VR-eligible individuals may be required to provide financial support towards VR services, such as training and postsecondary education, as outlined in their approved IPE. To ensure effective collaboration and coordination for service delivery, VR agencies and the schools are required to plan and coordinate pre-employment transition services and transition services for students with disabilities, as agreed upon in the State's formal interagency agreement.

The interagency agreements meet the requirement for collaboration between the State education and VR agencies at the State-level and are important because the agreements provide the basis for determining which agency pays for certain services. It is important for students with disabilities and family members to be aware of these agreements, because they serve as the foundation for coordinated services for students with disabilities exiting school and pursuing VR services. In this way, students, family members, and representatives can be more informed participants during the transition planning process and service delivery.

Formal Interagency Agreement

In each State, a formal interagency agreement or other mechanism must be developed between the SEA, as appropriate, the LEA, and the VR agency. This agreement is intended to facilitate a seamless delivery system of services from school to post-school activities.

The formal interagency agreement required under the VR program regulations must include provisions that address, at a minimum, the following:

- Consultation and technical assistance by the State VR agency to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
- Transition planning by State VR agency and school personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their IEPs;
- The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for pre-employment transition services and transition services;
- Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services;
- Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements with regard to students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment;
- Assurance that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an agreement with an employer holding a section 14(c) certificate under the *Fair Labor Standards Act* for the purpose of operating a program in which students or youth with disabilities are paid subminimum wage; and
- An understanding that nothing in the formal interagency agreement will be construed to reduce the obligation under *IDEA* or any other agency to provide or pay for pre-employment transition services or transition services that are also considered special education or related services and necessary for FAPE.

Additionally, under *IDEA,* these interagency agreements must include:

- An identification of, or method for defining, the financial responsibility of each agency in order to ensure that all services that are needed to ensure a FAPE are provided, provided that the financial responsibility of each public agency, including the State Medicaid agency and other public insurers of youth with disabilities, shall precede the financial responsibility of the LEA (or State agency responsible for developing the child's IEP). The services that are needed to ensure FAPE include, but are not limited to, services described in *IDEA* relating to assistive technology devices and services, related services, supplementary aids and services, and transition services;
- The conditions, terms, and procedures under which a LEA shall be reimbursed by other agencies; and
- Procedures for resolving interagency disputes (including procedures under which LEAs may initiate proceedings) under the agreement or other mechanism to secure reimbursement from other agencies or otherwise implement the provisions of the agreement or mechanism.

It is expected that SEAs, LEAs, and VR agencies will work together to implement the provisions of their respective interagency agreements. Decisions about whether the service is related to an employment outcome or education attainment, or if it is considered a special education or related service, as well as whether the service is one customarily provided under *IDEA* or the *Rehabilitation Act* are ones that are made at the State and local level by SEA, VR and LEA personnel. For example, work-based learning experiences, such as internships, short-term employment, or on-the-job trainings located in the community may be appropriate pre-employment transition services under the *Rehabilitation Act* or transition services under *IDEA*, as determined by the IEP Team and depending on the student's individualized needs. The mere fact that those services are now authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act* as pre-employment transition services does not mean the school should cease providing them and refer those students to the VR program. If these work-based learning experiences are not customary services provided by an LEA, the VR agencies and LEA are urged to collaborate and coordinate the provision of such services.[14]

Youth with Disabilities No Longer in School

Transition planning is critical for any youth with a disability, whether they are in school or not. A VR counselor can assist youth with disabilities in exploring careers, identifying a career path leading to their vocational goal, and identifying the services and steps to reach that goal. With the exception of pre-employment transition services and transition services provided to groups of individuals with disabilities, VR services are provided only to those individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities, who have been determined eligible for services and the services are described in an approved IPE.

Although youth with disabilities who do not meet the definition of a "student with a disability" may not receive pre-employment transition services, they may receive transition services as group transition services, prior to or after applying for VR services, as well as individualized transition or other VR services, after being determined eligible for the VR program and under an approved IPE. Individualized transition services provided under an approved IPE to a youth with a disability eligible for the VR

program may consist of, among other things: job exploration counseling, including assessments and vocational guidance and counseling; work adjustment training, vocational/occupational training, or postsecondary education; and job development services, including job search, job placement, and job coaching services.

Coordination of Services

Often, youth with disabilities are not familiar with the community programs and services that are available to them as young adults, especially if they are no longer in school. The VR program is designed to assess, plan, develop, and provide VR services to eligible individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. The VR agency assigns a VR counselor to each eligible individual, and the VR counselor can help the youth develop the IPE.

A VR counselor can assist youth in finding and applying for essential daily living services and resources, such as health and housing referrals needed to successfully implement their employment plans. Each community agency sets its criteria for services and, once the youth meets the eligibility criteria, service delivery begins. The VR counselor is available to coordinate VR services with services provided by employment-related programs, such as youth programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and provided at American Job Centers.

U.S. Department of Labor Youth Programs

Youth programs funded under Title I of *WIOA* include five new program elements: financial literacy instruction; entrepreneurial skills training; provision of local labor market and employment information; activities that help youth transition to postsecondary education and training; and education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Two well-known youth programs funded by DOL are the Job Corps and YouthBuild. Each of these programs integrates vocational (including classroom and practical experiences), academic and employability skills training designed to prepare youth for stable, long-term, high-paying employment. Job Corps programs offer career technical training in over 100 career areas. YouthBuild programs focus on the construction trades. Some students are eligible to receive youth services from DOL programs. These youth must be age 14–21, attending school, from a low income family, and they must meet one or more additional conditions, such as being an English language learner, homeless, an offender, or others.

For more information on these programs, please see the *WIOA Fact Sheet: Youth Program* at: **www.doleta.gov/*WIOA*/Docs/*WIOA*_YouthProgram_FactSheet.pdf**.

Social Security Administration Work Program

The Social Security Administration (SSA) funds the Ticket to Work program to provide career development services to beneficiaries between age 18 to 64 to assist these individuals to become financially independent. SSA issues a letter, referred to as the “Ticket,” to eligible beneficiaries that can be used to obtain free employment services from a provider of their choice that is registered with SSA.

Both a single agency and a group of providers are comprised of a consortium of employers referred to as the Employment Network. While pursuing employment, the individual continues to receive SSA benefits and employment-related services to become employed and to maintain that employment. Services include, but are not limited to, vocational counseling, training, education, and job coaching, and are provided based on the individual's needs. More information on this program is located at: **www.chooseworkttw.net/about/**.

Examples to Consider: States are Coordinating Transition Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Supporting Students with Disabilities

In one State, a community rehabilitation program provides supported employment services and intensive case management services for youth with significant emotional and behavioral disabilities who dropped out of high school or are at risk of dropping out. The program uses work as a means to reach individuals with significant employment challenges. The State VR program works in partnership with the State Department of Justice, Department of Health/Division of Mental Health, and the Department of Children and Families in various sites around this State. Program data report that more than 90 percent of these students were not working when they entered the program; however, after receiving career preparation services and related employment supports and services, approximately three-quarters of the students had paid employment and more than a third of the students achieved an employment outcome.

State Educational Agency and State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Collaboration

A VR agency partnered with a school district to co-locate a dedicated transition VR Counselor and technician in an office with school district transition personnel. Full-time VR agency and school district personnel worked together to secure employment opportunities for eligible students with disabilities. The office space was funded by the school district. The VR agency and school district operated under a signed agreement in which the VR agency provided its own office equipment, clerical supplies, computer, phones, and staff. This collaboration provided an opportunity for VR staff to work side-by-side with school district transition personnel to facilitate improved outcomes.

Conclusion: Coordination is required

Transition services are best delivered within a framework of structured planning, meaningful youth and family engagement, and State agency coordination and accountability.

A Sample Flow Chart of Key Points in the Transition Process[15]

The ultimate purpose of transition planning is to make decisions and assign responsibilities related to the student's desired post-school goals. In this regard, the importance of a common understanding of available services and corresponding activities to receive such services cannot be overstated. All members of the IEP and IPE Teams are encouraged to be active participants, especially students with disabilities, their family members or, as appropriate, representatives.

The following sample flow chart is provided as a quick reference tool for students and their families to have a better understanding of the coordination between IEP and IPE team members with respect to the transition activities in the transition process.

The flow chart begins with activities and services starting while the student is in school, such as participation in IEP meetings, consulting with other State agencies, applying for VR services and moving forward to engage in employment services provided by the VR agency. You may use the following chart to ensure a common understanding among all involved in the transition process.

Key Points in the Transition Process

Alignment: IEP and IPE alignment facilitates a seamless service delivery process.

#1	**Individualized Education Program**	**Participate** in your IEP or child's IEP development to **ensure** that transition services are addressed in your child's IEP by age 16 (or earlier, depending on your state's laws). Students with disabilities and their representative are critical members of the IEP Team and have valuable information that is needed for quality transition planning.
#2	**Be Familiar with the Steps to Transition Planning**	Schools should: 1. **Invite** student; 2. **Administer** age appropriate transition assessments; 3. **Determine** needs, interests, preferences, and strengths; 4. **Develop** postsecondary goals; 5. **Create** annual goals consistent with postsecondary goals; 6. **Determine** transition services, including course of study needed to assist your student in reaching those goals; 7. **Consult** other agencies, in particular, the VR agency; and 8. **Update** annually.
#3	**Implementation of Transition Services**	Provide transition services as identified in the IEP. Pre-employment transition services are provided under the *Rehabilitation Act.* Alignment of the IEP and IPE facilitates a seamless service delivery process.
#4	**Referral to VR and/or Other Adult Agencies**	1. Pre-employment transition services provided under the *Rehabilitation Act*, as appropriate; 2. Familiarize yourself with laws relating to other programs; and 3. Learn about community agencies that provide services to support students, such as travel training and daily living skills.
#5	**VR Application Process**	1. **Share employment interests** and capabilities during the intake interview. 2. **Focus on assessment(s)** to lead to the student's postsecondary goals.
#6	**Individualized Plan for Employment**	**Once a student has been determined eligible for VR services**, the IPE must be developed and approved within 90 days, and no later than the time student leaves the school setting.
#7	**Common VR Services Available under the *Rehabilitation Act***	1. Transition services; 2. Vocational counseling; 3. Vocational training; 4. Postsecondary education; 5. Supported employment services; 6. Career development; and 7. Job placement.
#8	**VR Service Record Closure**	As a result of the student or youth with disability: 1. Achieving an employment outcome; or 2. No longer pursuing an employment outcome and, therefore, determined ineligible for VR services.

3. Options after Leaving Secondary School: Education and Employment Goals

Overview

Postsecondary education is one of the most important post-school goals; and research has demonstrated that it is the primary goal for most students with disabilities.[16] As students with disabilities transition from secondary school to postsecondary education, training, and employment, it is critical that they are prepared academically and financially. Postsecondary options, with the help of the VR program, include two- and four-year colleges and universities, trade and vocational schools, adult education programs, and employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment or supported employment.

This section will describe specific actions to be taken and available services and supports for students and youth with disabilities. The services described in this section are provided at the secondary and postsecondary levels to help students and youth with disabilities succeed in their post-school goals.

Postsecondary Education and Training Options

Preparing for College

Secondary School

Whether in middle or high school, if an *IDEA*-eligible student is planning to attend college, there are a number of critical steps to be taken to become college-ready. Early in the transition process, a student is encouraged to:

- Take interesting and challenging courses that prepare him or her for college;
- Be involved in school or community-based activities that allow him or her to explore career interests, including work-based learning or internship opportunities;
- Meet with school guidance counselors to discuss career goals, such as vocational and educational goals, programs of study, college requirements, including the admissions process and any standardized tests required for admission; and
- Be an active participant during the IEP meetings.

As noted earlier, the IEP Team is responsible for ensuring that the student's IEP includes the specialized instruction, supports, and services needed to assist the student in preparing for college and/or other postsecondary schools.

Students with disabilities and their families interested in higher education are encouraged to consider the college environment that provides the best educational program and support services to assist students with meeting their needs and career goals.

For tips on navigating the college application process, please visit: **https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college/applying**.

For more information on preparing for college, please see the college prep checklist at: **https://studentaid.ed.gov/sites/default/files/college-prep-checklist.pdf**.

IDEA-eligible students with disabilities will benefit from discussions with their parents, school guidance counselor, VR counselor (if applicable), and other professional support staff about the services and supports needed to be successful in postsecondary education or training. For *IDEA*-eligible students whose eligibility terminates because the student has graduated from secondary school with a regular high school diploma or the student has exceeded the age of eligibility for FAPE under State law, the school district must provide the student with an SOP that documents the student's academic achievement, functional performance and recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her postsecondary goals.

Paying for College

The Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) in the U.S. Department of Education plays a central role in the nation's postsecondary education community. Through the FSA, the Department awards about $150 billion a year in grants, work-study funds, and low-interest loans to approximately 13 million students. There are three types of Federal student aid:

Grants and Scholarships: Financial aid that does not have to be repaid, including the Federal Pell grant that can award as much as $5,815 to each low-income student per year;

Work-Study: A program that allows students to earn money for their education; and

Low Interest Loans: Aid that allows students to borrow money for their education; loans must be repaid with interest.

The following website provides information about the three types of student aid: **https://studentaid.ed.gov**.

Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step toward getting financial aid for college. The FAFSA not only provides access to the $150 billion in grants, loans, and work-study funds that the Federal government has available, but many States, schools, and private scholarships require students to submit the FAFSA before they will consider offering any financial aid. That is why it is important that every college-bound student complete the FAFSA. FAFSA is free, and there is help provided throughout the application at: **https://fafsa.ed.gov/help.htm**.

It is also easier than ever to complete, taking only an average time of less than thirty minutes. For more information, visit: **https://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/filling-out**.

Choosing the Right College

College is a big investment in time, money, and effort; and, therefore, it is important to research and understand the types of schools, tuition and costs, programs available, student enrollment, and a variety of other important factors when choosing the right school. Please see the college reference guide to help choose the right college at: **https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college/choosing-schools**.

When researching potential college programs, students and their families are advised to work closely with the disability support services (DSS) office on campus to discuss disability-related concerns and needs, and the disability support services available to students at that postsecondary school. Many DSS offices empower, support, and advocate for students with disabilities to achieve their goals by providing access to education and other programs through the coordination of appropriate accommodations and academic adjustments, assistive technology, alternative formats, and other support. Disability support services, including academic adjustments and auxiliary aids, are provided in compliance with Section 504 and Title II of the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Title II)*. Information about the DSS office may be found at the postsecondary school's website. The U.S Department of Education publication "College Scorecard" (**https://collegescorecard.ed.gov**) also provides data on outcomes and affordability to help select the right college.

Rights and Responsibilities in Postsecondary Education and Training

Students with disabilities are encouraged to be well informed about their rights and responsibilities, as well as the responsibilities of postsecondary schools. Being informed about their rights and responsibilities will help ensure that students have full opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the postsecondary education experience without disruption or delay.

A postsecondary student with a disability is *not* entitled to the same services and supports that the student received in high school. While students with disabilities are entitled to comprehensive supports under the FAPE requirements of *IDEA* or Section 504, if applicable, while in high school, they are no longer entitled to FAPE under *IDEA* or Section 504 if they graduate with a regular high school diploma.

At the postsecondary level, Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of Federal financial assistance, and Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities, regardless of receipt of Federal funds.[17] Note that if the postsecondary institution is a private college or university that is not a religious entity, it would be covered by Title III of the *ADA* (Title III). The Department of Education does not enforce the Title III rights of postsecondary students with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Justice enforces Title III.

Section 504 and Title II require that the postsecondary educational institution provide students with disabilities with accommodations, including appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services, that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in a school's program.[18] [19]

Postsecondary educational institutions are not required to make adjustments or provide aids or services that would result in a fundamental alteration of their academic program or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the postsecondary institution's programs.[20]

To receive these supports, a student with a disability must inform the college that he or she has a disability and needs one or more accommodations. The college is not required to identify the student as having a disability or assess the student's needs prior to receiving a request for an accommodation. Colleges may set reasonable requirements for documentation that students must provide. While an IEP or Section 504 plan from high school may be helpful in identifying services that have been effective for the student, such a plan will generally not be sufficient documentation by itself.

The IEP Team, VR counselor, or support professionals can provide specific guidance to prepare the student for postsecondary education and training. For example, they may provide an overview of how to self-disclose individual needs or functional limitations in the postsecondary educational setting.

An overview of the rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities who are preparing to attend postsecondary schools, as well as the obligations of a postsecondary school to provide academic adjustments, including auxiliary aids and services, is available to ensure the school does not discriminate on the basis of disability. "Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities" is available on the Department's website at: **www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html**.

Structural Supports and Physical Accessibility

Section 504 and the *ADA* set forth requirements related to the physical accessibility of facilities, including those used for higher education purposes. In recent decades, the removal of architectural barriers, such as providing curb cuts, ramps, and elevators, helped make higher education more inclusive for students with disabilities. Structural accommodations involve making buildings accessible to individuals with disabilities. Typical structural accommodations include ramp availability, elevators, convenient parking, doorway and restroom facilities modifications, and architectural barriers removal or modifications. In situations where architectural barriers cannot be removed, some institutions have changed the location of classes or other activities to a site that is accessible.

Vocational Rehabilitation Supports for Postsecondary Education

The VR program assists individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities, to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to achieve employment that can sustain economic independence. If it is determined to be necessary and is included on the individual's IPE, the VR agencies can provide financial support to eligible individuals to pay for or offset higher education-related expenses, including college expenses not covered by student financial aid, or disability related expenses, such as personal assistants, interpreters, readers, and education support services.

The student's IPE lists the services that the VR agency and other responsible parties will provide. VR financial support commonly listed in an IPE could include the following postsecondary expenses:

- Vocational and other training services;
- Personal and vocational adjustment training; and
- Advanced training in the fields of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics, computer science, medicine, law, or business in an institution of higher education (universities, colleges, vocational schools, technical institutes, hospital schools of nursing or any other postsecondary education institution) books, tools; and other training materials.

Before the VR agency can provide financial support for most VR services, the VR agency and the student must identify other sources of funding. This requirement is frequently referred to as a search for comparable benefits under the VR program. With respect to the provision of training, including postsecondary education at an institution of higher education (IHE), both the VR counselor and student or representative, as appropriate, must make every effort to secure grant assistance from other sources to pay for that training prior to the VR agency providing financial support.

Pell grants are identified as grant assistance through the FAFSA and would be included in a search for comparable benefits. However, scholarships or awards based on merit or student loans do not count as grant assistance, for purposes of searching for comparable benefits, under the VR program. The VR program does not require a student to apply for merit-based scholarships or awards or apply for student loans. If a student accepts a merit-based scholarship that is restricted to specific costs, such as tuition, fees, room and board, the VR program will take that reduction in expenses into consideration when calculating the amount it could pay to assist the student in order to avoid duplication in funding.

Interagency Agreements between State VR Agencies and Public Institutions of Higher Education

To ensure that students with disabilities are able to access services that enable them to fully participate in education, VR agencies must enter into an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination with public IHEs in the State. The agreement or mechanism must address the coordination of services, agency financial responsibilities, provision of accommodations and auxiliary aids and services, reimbursement matters, and procedures for resolving interagency disputes. The local VR agency and DSS office can assist students and families with connecting to the support services offered at IHEs.

Postsecondary Education and Training Programs and Opportunities

The following are examples of such programs that are funded through the U.S. Department of Education:

Gallaudet University

Gallaudet University, federally charted in 1864, is a bilingual, diverse, multicultural institution of higher education that ensures the intellectual and professional advancement of deaf and hard of hearing individuals through American Sign Language and English. Deaf and hard-of-hearing undergraduate

students can choose from more than 40 majors leading to a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree. To learn more, you may visit: **www.gallaudet.edu**.

National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)

NTID is a special institution that is funded by OSERS. It is one of the nine colleges within Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), a leading career-oriented, technological university. Approximately 1,200 students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing attend NTID. NTID offers students two-year, career-focused degree programs, opportunities to participate in the university's cooperative education program, a faculty who specialize in educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students, and the opportunity to enroll in RIT's four-year degree programs. For more information, please visit: **www.ntid.rit.edu**.

Model Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) into Higher Education

The *Higher Education Opportunity Act* includes provisions to increase access and opportunities for youth and adults with intellectual disabilities who are interested in participating in higher education programs.

The Department's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) funded 25 TPSID projects in 2015 to serve students with intellectual disabilities by providing access to academically inclusive college courses, enhancing participation in internships and competitive integrated employment, and encouraging engagement in social and personal development activities. OPE also funds a national coordinating center to provide support, coordination, training, and evaluation services for TPSID grantees and other programs for students with intellectual disabilities nationwide. The national coordinating center is administered by Think College, a project team at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

For more information about the TPSID program and projects, please visit the Think College website at: **www.thinkcollege.net/about-us/think-college-grant-projects/national-coordinating-center**.

Examples of State and Local Collaboration to Support Postsecondary Options for Individuals with Disabilities

Autism Services

A VR agency, secondary school, and a local community college collaborated in a grant-funded project, which provided comprehensive supports to individuals with autism enrolled at a local community college. At the conclusion of the grant, the VR agency identified a staff person to continue providing supports to 20 students enrolled at three community colleges in the community college system, with some participants transitioning to four-year universities. Supports included faculty trainings, career guidance, self-advocacy instruction, and increased communication with VR counselors, faculty, and family members.

Supported Education

A VR agency collaborated with a community college to develop a supported education program. This initiative provides additional tutoring, study skills training, college life and other training for transition students who enroll in the community college, and seek remedial courses before matriculating into a degree or certificate program. The goal is to make community college education and training an option for more transition-age students with disabilities, and increase their success rate in college.

A student suffered a stroke at a very young age, and afterwards, was unable to walk, talk, or breathe on his own. However, he did not have any cognitive damage that impacted his intellectual functioning during the stroke. Despite his challenges, he graduated from high school and entered a rigorous four-year college. This student received a bachelor's degree in fine arts. His postsecondary educational success can be largely attributed to his own personal drive, supportive parents, and knowledgeable service providers.

Postsecondary Employment Options

For more than two decades, one of the principal goals of disability policy in the United States, as it influenced special education, vocational rehabilitation, and employment services nationwide, has been to improve employment opportunities for young people with disabilities as they exit secondary education programs.[21] As noted in the *Rehabilitation Act*, as amended by *WIOA*, one of the primary purposes of the *Rehabilitation Act* is to maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities, for competitive integrated employment.

Preparing for Careers

VR agencies value early engagement with students and youth with disabilities to assist them in preparing for a satisfying career. Early participation in job readiness training can provide the tools and guidance that the student and youth with a disability need to successfully seek, find, advance in, or maintain employment. Job readiness training refers to developing job-seeking skills, such as preparing resumes or completing job applications, practicing interview techniques, honing workplace behaviors, or participating in a job club.

Many models of career development identify stages that are widely accepted as leading to a satisfying and productive career. [22]

These stages include:

- **Career awareness ►** When individuals begin to develop self-awareness and learn about work values and roles in work, usually in elementary school;
- **Career exploration ►** When individuals gather information to explore work interest, skills, abilities, and the requirements of various employment options, usually starting in middle school or early high school; career decision making when individuals begin to select job and career areas that match interests and aptitudes, usually beginning in high school, but often continuing well into adulthood;
- **Career preparation ►** When youth begin to understand their strengths and challenges and make informed choices about preparation activities that will lead to a chosen career area, usually throughout high school and postsecondary school; and
- **Career placement ►** When youth begin to responsibly and productively participate in a job and a career area.

VR counselors have specialized training to assist the youth in developing an IPE. The VR counselor gathers as much information as possible about the youth's work history, education and training, abilities and interests, rehabilitation needs, and possible career goals. In gathering the information, the counselor will first look to existing information to assist in both VR eligibility determination and plan development. VR agencies, SEAs, community rehabilitation programs, and other community partners work together to provide a range of resources to facilitate the objectives and goals of the IPE.

The following work opportunities and options assist students and youth with disabilities to achieve their desired career goals.

On-the-Job Training as a Path to Employment

On-the-job training (OJT) is one type of community-based work experience that is often associated with an existing job opportunity. Through OJT, an individual learns a specific skill taught by an employer in the work environment. To learn more about OJT and businesses, visit: **www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Oli-Per/On-the-Job-Training.html**.

OJT offers an opportunity for the individual to be hired at the conclusion of the training period. A VR counselor and a youth with a disability often use the OJT approach as a career exploration opportunity or work experience to obtain entry-level work skills. This training is designed to be short-term and offers a paid or unpaid work experience. VR counselors identify and arrange for the OJT with employers, and frequently provide transportation or other employment related services and supports while the individual is participating in OJT. Additional information about community-based work experiences is discussed in section one of this guide.

Types of Employment Outcomes Authorized under the *Rehabilitation Act*

When developing the IPE, the student or youth with the disability may choose from any employment goal that meets the definition of an "employment outcome" for purposes of the VR program. This means the employment goal must be one in competitive integrated employment (including customized employment and self-employment) or supported employment. Each of these options is discussed in more detail below.

Competitive Integrated Employment

Competitive integrated employment pays a competitive wage in a location where both workers with disabilities and those without disabilities (other than supervisors or individuals supporting the worker with a disability) interact on a daily basis while performing their job. Competitive integrated employment offers the same level of benefits for all employees, including those with disabilities, and offers the same opportunities for advancement for individuals with disabilities and those without disabilities working in similar positions. See the Glossary for the definition of competitive integrated employment.

The *Rehabilitation Act* emphasizes the achievement of competitive integrated employment to ensure that all individuals with disabilities, especially students and youth with disabilities served through the VR program, are provided every opportunity to achieve employment with earnings comparable to those paid to individuals without disabilities, in a setting that allows them to interact with individuals who do not have disabilities. Through the sharing of program information and coordination of joint training, VR program and school staff can explore and identify transition-related services, such as work-based learning, dual enrollment programs, and competitive integrated employment or supported employment opportunities for students exiting school.

WIOA amendments to the *Rehabilitation Act* build on this effort by emphasizing that individuals with disabilities, especially students and youth with disabilities, are given the opportunity to train and work in competitive integrated employment or supported employment. Both school and VR program staff are now responsible for providing documentation of completion of specific services and actions prior to referring a student with a disability to subminimum wage employment. School officials are responsible for providing the VR agency documentation of completion of appropriate transition services under *IDEA*, consistent with the confidentiality requirements of the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act*. VR agencies are required to provide the youth with documentation of completion of transition services under *IDEA* in addition to completion of pre-employment transition services and other appropriate services under the VR program. The youth with a disability must obtain this documentation prior to starting a job at subminimum wage with an employer who holds a section 14(c) certificate under the *Fair Labor Standards Act*.

VR agency staff is available to consult with school staff and others to share information that will enable school staff, students, and family members to better understand the medical aspects of disabilities as they relate to employment, the purpose of the VR program, how and when VR staff can best serve the employment needs of the students in the transition process, and how school staff can assist students in their preparation for VR services leading to an employment outcome in competitive integrated employment or supported employment.

Supported Employment

Supported employment refers to competitive integrated employment or employment in an integrated work setting in which individuals are working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment. Supported employment services, including job coaching, are designed for individuals with the most significant disabilities who need ongoing support services because of the nature and severity of their disability in order to perform the work involved. A job coach provides intensive training and on-going support to an individual to learn and perform job tasks at the work site, to teach and reinforce acceptable work behaviors, and to develop positive working relationships with his or her co-workers. As needed, the job coach is able to develop individualized accommodation tools for use on the job, such as picture albums of the sequence of steps in a job or communication aids for individuals with speech or hearing deficits. See the Glossary for the definition of supported employment.

As the student or youth with a disability learns and demonstrates progress in these areas, the job coach decreases the support and time spent with the individual on the job. The job coach makes follow-up or check-in visits on the job site to determine if the individual is performing well on the job and to provide additional job coaching when job tasks change or the student or youth needs repeated training on a particular task.

Sometimes, the job coach, family member, or youth will identify a co-worker who can provide assistance rather than the job coach. This assistance offers natural support for the individual while working.

> *A natural support approach refers to enhancing or linking individuals to existing social supports in the work environment that are available either informally (from co-workers and peers on the job) or formally (from supervisors and company-sponsored employment programs). Natural workplace support approaches require more intensive efforts up-front to link the employee to available supports since the approach does not rely on the continuing presence of the job coach.*[23]

However, when there is no natural support available and the individual needs ongoing support services, a family member or another agency, such as developmental disabilities, Medicaid, or the VR agencies provides the job coaching or other services. Other services frequently include transportation, daily living, or counseling services relating to attendance or arriving to work on time.

Ongoing support services needed by an individual to maintain a job, such as job placement follow-up, counseling, and training, are considered “extended services.” These services are identified on the IPE, along with the service provider that will fund and provide these services. VR agencies may provide extended services to a youth with a most significant disability for a period up to four years or until the youth turns 25 years old. See the Glossary for the definition of extended services.

Customized Employment

While supported employment matches the individual with a position and trains him or her to perform the essential tasks in that position, customized employment designs or tailors job tasks to meet the individual's interests, skills, and capabilities, as well as the needs of the employer. Customized employment is accomplished by using various strategies, including:

- Customizing a job description based on current employer needs or on previously unidentified and unmet employer needs;
- Developing a set of job duties, a work schedule and job arrangement, and specifics of supervision (including performance evaluation and review), and determining a job location;
- Using a professional representative chosen by the individual, or if elected self-representation, to work with an employer to facilitate placement; and
- Providing services and supports at the job location.

Examples of individuals in customized employment across the country are included in "Customized Employment Works Everywhere." You may go to the website to learn more: **www.dol.gov/odep/documents/vignette_v3_blue_508_final.pdf**.

Self-Employment

Self-employment refers to an individual working for him or herself and being responsible for earning his or her own income from a trade or business rather than working for an employer and being paid a salary or wage.

A student or youth with a disability could choose self-employment in a particular business that matches his or her career strengths and interests. Individuals choose self-employment for many reasons, whether it is to work in or out of the home in order to meet family care responsibilities, or to control work schedules or to meet their accessibility needs. The range of occupations for self-employment is vast. For example, individuals with disabilities may choose to be a self-employed certified public accountant, medical billing services provider, comic book artist, or lunch cart operator, among many other options.

VR agencies offer services and guidance to assist a student or youth with a disability to prepare for self-employment, such as training or start-up costs for their business. Typically, the VR counselor will recommend that the individual develop a business plan that includes a market analysis supporting the self-employment venture, the individual's work role in the business, anticipated income based on local market information, identification of the support services needed, and the tools, equipment or supplies needed and their cost. In many cases, the VR counselor refers the student or youth to local community organizations that provide technical assistance to develop the business plan or pay for the development of a business plan. The student or youth and the VR counselor will use the collected information to identify the objectives and goals in their IPE. You may learn more about self-employment in the fact sheet, *Self-Employment Q & A: Accessing Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Facilitate Self-Employment as an Employment Outcome,* which discusses the VR process and how to develop a plan for self-employment. Visit: **www.worksupport.com/resources/content.cfm?id=646**.

Conclusion: Know Your Options to Plan

A range of options is available for students to use in achieving their educational and career aspirations. Students, family members, educators, VR counselors, and other support professionals are encouraged to know about available postsecondary opportunities and services to properly plan and prepare a youth with a disability for adult life.

4. Supporting Student-Made Decisions: Preparation for Adult Life

Overview

Successful post-school transition is most likely to happen when students are actively engaged in their own transition planning. To engage students, families, IEP Teams, VR professionals, and other support professionals should:

- Set high expectations;
- Use a person-centered planning approach;
- Support the student's social and emotional learning;
- Provide the student or youth with support to make their decisions; and
- Counsel the student and their representative to make informed choices.

This section presents key elements of supported decision-making and describes the practice of informed choice to assist students and youth with disabilities in their decisions for adult life.

Setting High Expectations for Secondary School Students with Disabilities

Expectations play a critical role to success in employment and postsecondary educational settings. Low expectations are often cited as significant barriers to academic and career achievement for students with disabilities.[24] For example, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that attitudinal barriers of faculty and support service providers in postsecondary educational settings have been shown to inhibit the performance of students with disabilities.[25]

In contrast, setting high expectations for students with disabilities promote successful post-school transition. Research demonstrates that students with disabilities do better when they are held to high expectations and have access to the general education curriculum.[26]

To set high expectations and foster successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities, all individuals concerned with their education should:

- Establish a school-wide culture of high expectations;
- Provide students with disabilities access to rigorous coursework (see accelerated programs section below);
- Ensure students with disabilities have IEP goals that are aligned with the challenging academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled and ensure that students with disabilities receive the specialized instruction, related services and other supports they need to meaningfully access, be involved, and make progress in the general education curriculum;

- Provide students with disabilities the opportunity to access College and Career Ready Standards and Assessments; and
- Ensure educators have the tools and resources necessary to support success.[27]

Person-Centered Planning

When developing the IEP or the IPE, planning is centered on the interests, strengths, skills, and needs of the student or youth with disability. Person-centered approaches:

- Include in the planning process, individuals who have a deep knowledge of the student's academic and social history;
- View the student as an individual and as a person, rather than as a diagnosis or disability;
- Use everyday language in transition planning, rather than "professional jargon;" and
- Ensure that goals are developed based on the student's unique strengths, interests, and capacities.

Addressing Students' Social and Emotional Needs

It is important to address the social and emotional needs of students with disabilities to ensure that they have the skills needed to be successful in a postsecondary educational setting or workplace. Students with disabilities who have well-developed social skills are more likely to be able to successfully navigate employment, community, and postsecondary education settings.[28]

IEP Teams need to take active steps to provide opportunities for students with disabilities to acquire appropriate social skills. Many of these opportunities can be integrated into the student's existing course of study. Specific strategies include:

- **Role-playing**
  Schools can create opportunities for students with disabilities to practice appropriate social skills in a variety of contexts, including school-based, workplace, community, and postsecondary educational settings.
- **Participation in social and emotional learning programs**
  A variety of specific social skill development programs exist that can help students acquire critical social skills.[29]
- **Positive school climate**
  Parents should be aware that a positive school climate is critical to helping students with

disabilities develop strong social skills. For example, safe and supportive classrooms build on the students' strengths.[1]

Providing the Student and Youth with Support to Make Their Decisions

Beyond developing social skills, it is crucial for students with disabilities to understand and acquire the skills for self-determination during high school to ensure success in postsecondary education and the workplace.[30] Students with strong self-advocacy skills who understand and fully participate in the development of their IEP and SOP have better transition outcomes.[31]

Key characteristics of self-determination are the ability to:

- Speak for yourself (self-advocacy);
- Solve problems;
- Set goals;
- Make decisions;
- Possess self-awareness; and
- Exhibit independence.[32]

Schools help students develop self-determination skills when they:

- Support students in establishing their own transition goals, including postsecondary education, career, and independent living goals;
- Ensure that students are actively involved in IEP meetings and understand their IEPs, including their specialized instruction and related services, the accommodations they receive for instruction and assessments, if applicable, and supplementary aids and services to facilitate their education in the least restrictive environment;
- Help students develop skills to direct their own learning;
- Use person-centered planning; and
- Create and maintain a system that supports family involvement and empowers families to support the self-determination of their sons and daughters.[33]

Developing self-determination and making informed choices heighten students' knowledge of the transition process and success in post-school settings.[34]

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[1] Please visit the U.S. Department of Education's *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* for additional strategies: **www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf**.

Self-determination activities can be described as activities that result in individuals with developmental disabilities, with appropriate assistance, having the ability, opportunity, authority, and support (including financial support) to:

- Communicate and make personal decisions;
- Communicate choices and exercise control over the type and intensity of services, supports, and other assistance the individual receives;
- Control resources to obtain needed services, supports and other assistance;
- Participate in, and contribute to, their communities; and
- Advocate for themselves and others, develop leadership skills through training in self-advocacy, participate in coalitions, educate policymakers, and play a role in the development of public policies that affect individuals with developmental disabilities.

Making Informed Choices

The VR agency must provide its participants with the opportunity to exercise informed choice throughout the VR process, including making decisions about the following:

- Employment goals;
- Services and service providers;
- Settings for employment and service provision; and
- Methods for procuring services.

The VR agency assists participants by providing information, guidance, and support to make and carry out these decisions. The exercise of informed choice involves communicating clearly, gathering and understanding information, setting goals, making decisions, and following through with decisions. VR counselors provide information through various methods of communication that are helpful to a family in order to assist with identifying opportunities for exercising informed choice from the beginning of the VR process through the achievement of an employment outcome.

Parameters of Informed Choice

While the *Rehabilitation Act* emphasizes the importance of the individual's, including the student's or youth's, ability to exercise informed choice throughout the VR process, the *Rehabilitation Act* requires the VR agencies to ensure that the availability and scope of informed choice is consistent with the VR agencies' responsibilities for the administration of the VR program. Such requirements impose parameters that affect the exercise of informed choice. It is generally the responsibility of the VR counselor to inform the individual about relevant requirements, available options for developing the IPE and for exercising informed choice to assure that the individual understands the options. As appropriate, the VR counselor encourages the participation of family members and others in the VR process.

Parental Consent, Age of Majority, Supported Decision-making and Guardianship

Outreach to parents, family members, caregivers, and representative's plays a critical role in the transition process. For students who receive services under Part B of *IDEA*, parental rights may transfer to the student when he or she reaches the "age of majority under State law," except for a child who has been determined incompetent under State law. The age of majority is the age that a State sets for a minor to become an adult and assume legal responsibility for himself/herself and all decisions that accompany that (e.g., financial, medical, educational).[35] In most States, this is age 18. To learn more about the age of majority visit: **www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/age-of-majority-parentguide**.

At the time a student reaches the age of majority, if parental rights have transferred to the student under State law, the student has the right to make his or her own educational, employment, or independent living decisions. VR agencies conduct outreach directly to these students. The consent of the parents or an *IDEA*-eligible student who has reached the age of majority must be obtained before personally identifiable information about the student is released to officials of participating agencies, including VR agencies that are providing or paying for transition services.

As *IDEA*-eligible students with disabilities reach the age of majority, they and their parents are advised to seek information to help them understand their options for making educational decisions. A student need not be placed under guardianship in order for his or her family to remain involved in educational decisions. Guardianship places significant restrictions on the rights of an individual. Students and parents are urged to consider information about less restrictive alternatives.

Parents' rights may transfer to an *IDEA*-eligible student with a disability who has reached the age of majority under State law that applies to all children, except for a student with a disability who has been determined to be incompetent under State law. If State law permits parental rights under the *IDEA* to transfer to a student who has reached the age of majority, that student can become the educational rights holder who invites family members to participate in the IEP meeting. If the adult student does not want to have that role, he or she can execute a power of attorney authorizing a family member to be the educational decision-maker. Alternatively, if a student does not have the capacity to execute a power of attorney or prefers not to use that option, a supported decision-making arrangement can be established consistent with applicable State procedures, in which the parents (or other representatives) assist the student in making decisions, if the student has not been determined to be incompetent but does not have the ability to provide informed consent with respect to his or her educational programs. Unlike under guardianship, the student remains an autonomous decision-maker in all aspects of his or her life. To learn more about supported decision-making visit: **www.supporteddecisionmaking.org**.

Families are encouraged to seek services from the Parent Training and Information Centers funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, and Parent Information and Training Programs funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Conclusion: Student Empowerment Advances Career Decision-Making

Teaching self-determination and exercising informed choice are not practices limited to the most able youth with disabilities. Schools can help foster self-determination and VR agencies can enhance career decision-making to assist youth with disabilities, including those with the most significant complex or lifelong intellectual or developmental disabilities, to achieve their desired post school goals.

Glossary of Terms

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).

Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 701 et seq.)

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA),
as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (20 U.S.C.6301 et Seq.)*

ALTERNATE DIPLOMA [*ESEA* Title VIII, Sec. 8101(25)]

Alternate diploma means a diploma for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, as defined by the State, who are assessed with a State's alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards under section 1111(b)(2)(D) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and is—

(i) Standards-based;

(ii) Aligned with the State's requirements for a regular high school diploma; and

(iii) Obtained within the time period for which the State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under section 612(a)(1) of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.

CHILD WITH A DISABILITY [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401(3)(A)]

IN GENERAL.—The term ''child with a disability'' means a child—

(A) with intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as ''emotional disturbance''), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and

(B) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(4)]

Community Rehabilitation Program means a program that provides directly or facilitates the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, and that provides, singly or in combination, for an individual with a disability to enable the individual to maximize opportunities for employment, including career advancement:

(A) medical, psychiatric, psychological, social, and vocational services that are provided under one management;

(B) testing, fitting, or training in the use of prosthetic and orthotic devices;

(C) recreational therapy;

(D) physical and occupational therapy;

(E) speech, language, and hearing therapy;

(F) psychiatric, psychological, and social services, including positive behavior management;

(G) assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs;

(H) rehabilitation technology;

(I) job development, placement, and retention services;

(J) evaluation or control of specific disabilities;

(K) orientation and mobility services for individuals who are blind;

(L) extended employment;

(M) psychosocial rehabilitation services;

(N) supported employment services and extended services;

(O) customized employment;

(P) services to family members when necessary to the vocational rehabilitation of the individual;

(Q) personal assistance services; or

(R) services similar to the services described in one of subparagraphs (A) through (Q).

COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT. [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(5)]

The term ''competitive integrated employment'' means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment)—

(A) for which an individual—

(i) is compensated at a rate that—

(I) (aa) shall be not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate specified in the applicable State or local minimum wage law; and

(bb) is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; or

(II) in the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and

(ii) is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees;

(B) that is at a location where the employee interacts with other persons who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with other persons; and

(C) that, as appropriate, presents opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(7)]

Customized Employment means competitive integrated employment, for an individual with a significant disability, that is based on an individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the individual with a significant disability, is designed to meet the specific abilities of the individual with a significant disability and the business needs of the employer, and is carried out through flexible strategies, such as:

(A) job exploration by the individual;

(B) working with an employer to facilitate placement, including:

  (i) customizing a job description based on current employer needs or on previously unidentified and unmet employer needs;

  (ii) developing a set of job duties, a work schedule and job arrangement, and specifics of supervision (including performance evaluation and review), and determining a job location.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(11)]

Employment Outcome means, with respect to an individual:

(A) entering or retaining full-time or, if appropriate, part-time competitive employment in the integrated labor market;

(B) satisfying the vocational outcome of supported employment; or

(C) satisfying any other vocational outcome the Secretary of Education may determine to be appropriate (including satisfying the vocational outcome of customized employment, self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership).

EXTENDED SERVICES [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(13)]

Extended Services means ongoing support services and other appropriate services, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment, that:

(A) are provided singly or in combination and are organized and made available in such a way as to assist an eligible individual in maintaining supported employment;

(B) are based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment; and

(C) are provided by a State agency, a nonprofit private organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, after an individual has made the transition from support provided by the designated State unit.

FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE) [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401(9)]

Under the *IDEA*, the term "free appropriate public education" means special education and related services that—

(A) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;

(B) meet the standards of the State educational agency;

(C) include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and

(D) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program required under **section 1414(d) of this title**.

Under the Department of Education's regulations implementing Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act*, appropriate education is the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services that

(i) are designed to meet individual educational needs of persons with disabilities as adequately as the needs of persons without disabilities are met and

(ii) are based upon adherence to procedures that satisfy the requirements of §§104.34, 104.35, and 104.36.

Implementation of an IEP developed in accordance with the *IDEA* is one means of meeting this standard (34 CFR §104.33(b)).

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401(14)]

The term individualized education program or IEP means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with section 614(d) of the *IDEA*.

INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(20)(A)]

IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in subparagraph (B), the term ''individual with a disability'' means any individual who—

(i) has a physical or mental impairment which for such individual constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment; and

(ii) can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services provided pursuant to title I, III, or VI.

INDIVIDUAL WITH A SIGNIFICANT DISABILITY [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(21)]

Individual with a Significant Disability means:

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B) or (C), the term ''individual with a significant disability'' means an individual with a disability:

(i) who has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;

(ii) whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

(iii) who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2) to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

INDEPENDENT INDIVIDUAL'S REPRESENTATIVE; APPLICANT'S REPRESENTATIVE [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(22)]

The terms ''individual's representative'' and ''applicant's representative'' mean a parent, a family member, a guardian, an advocate, or an authorized representative of an individual or applicant, respectively.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT OR LRE [20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(5)(A)]

Least restrictive environment or LRE means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

LOCAL AGENCY [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(24)]

Local Agency means an agency of a unit of general local government or of an Indian tribe (or combination of such units or tribes) which has an agreement with the designated State agency to conduct a vocational rehabilitation program under the supervision of such State agency in accordance with the State plan approved under section 101. Nothing in the preceding sentence of this paragraph or in section 101 shall be construed to prevent the local agency from arranging to utilize another local

public or nonprofit agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services if such an arrangement is made part of the agreement specified in this paragraph.

ONGOING SUPPORT SERVICES [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(27)]

Ongoing Support Services means services:

(A) provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities;

(B) provided, at a minimum, twice monthly:

(i) to make an assessment, regarding the employment situation, at the worksite of each such individual in supported employment, or, under special circumstances, especially at the request of the client, off site; and

(ii) based on the assessment, to provide for the coordination or provision of specific intensive services, at or away from the worksite, that are needed to maintain employment stability; and

(C) consisting of—

(i) a particularized assessment supplementary to the comprehensive assessment described in paragraph (2)(B);

(ii) the provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the worksite;

(iii) job development, job retention, and placement services;

(iv) social skills training;

(v) regular observation or supervision of the individual;

(vi) follow up services such as regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the individuals' representatives, and other appropriate individuals, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement;

(vii) facilitation of natural supports at the worksite;

(viii) any other service identified in section 723 of this title; or

(ix) a service similar to another service described in this subparagraph.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES [29 U.S.C. Secs 705(30) and 733]

Pre-Employment Transition Services are—

(a) IN GENERAL.—From the funds reserved under section 110(d), and any funds made available from State, local, or private funding sources, each State shall ensure that the designated State unit, in collaboration with the local educational agencies involved, shall provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services for all students with disabilities in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for services under this title.

(b) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—
Funds available under subsection (a) shall be used to make available to students with disabilities described in subsection (a)—

(1) job exploration counseling;

(2) work-based learning experiences, which may include in school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;

(3) counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

(4) workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and

(5) instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

(c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—
Funds available under subsection (a) and remaining after the provision of the required activities described in subsection (b) may be used to improve the transition of students with disabilities described in subsection (a) from school to postsecondary education or an employment outcome by—

(1) implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;

(2) developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;

(3) providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities;

(4) disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section;

(5) coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);

(6) applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section;

(7) developing model transition demonstration projects;

(8) establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of this section; and

(9) disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.
Sec. 113 *Rehabilitation Act* of 1973

(d) PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION COORDINATION.—

Each local office of a designated State unit shall carry out responsibilities consisting of—

(1) attending individualized education program meetings for students with disabilities, when invited;

(2) working with the local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, and apprenticeships;

(3) work with schools, including those carrying out activities under section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII) of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)), to coordinate and ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services under this section; and

(4) when invited, attend person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under title XIX of the *Social Security Act* (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA [*ESEA* Sec. 8101(43) and 34 CFR §200.34(c)(2)]

The term 'regular high school diploma'—

(A) means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma, except that a regular high school diploma shall not be aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1)(E); and

(B) does not include a recognized equivalent of a diploma, such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential, such as a diploma based on meeting IEP goals.

RELATED SERVICES [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401(26)]

Related Services means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes.

Related services also include school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training. 34 CFR §300.34. *IDEA* makes a specific exception to the list of related services: surgically implanted devices, including cochlear implants. Further explanations of exceptions and other key definitions are found under 34 CFR §300.34.

SECONDARY SCHOOL [20 U.S.C. 1401(27)]

Secondary School means a nonprofit day or residential school, including a public secondary charter school, that provides secondary education, as determined under State law, except that it does not include any education beyond grade 12.

SPECIAL EDUCATION [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401(29)]

Special Education means "specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including:

(A) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and

(B) instruction in physical education.

STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(37)]

Student with a Disability means:

IN GENERAL.—an individual with a disability who—

(i) (I) (aa) is not younger than the earliest age for the provision of transition services under section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII) of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)); or

(bb) if the State involved elects to use a lower minimum age for receipt of pre-employment transition services under this Act, is not younger than that minimum age; and

(II) (aa) is not older than 21 years of age; or

(bb) if the State law for the State provides for a higher maximum age for receipt of services under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (20 U.S.C.1400 et seq.), is not older than that maximum age; and

(ii) (I) is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under part B of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education* Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.); or

(II) is an individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504 student with a disability is an individual with a disability who is participating in an educational program, including secondary education, non-traditional secondary education and postsecondary education, who meet the age requirements of the definition.

SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE [20 U.S.C.1414(c)(5)(B)(ii) and Sec. 1401(c)(5)(B)(ii)]

Summary of Performance means for each student with a disability receiving services under Part B of the *IDEA* who either graduates from high school with a regular high school diploma or exceeds the age of eligibility for FAPE under State law, the school must provide the student with a summary of his or her academic achievement and functional performance. The SOP must include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her postsecondary goals.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(38)]

The term ''supported employment'' means competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, or employment in an integrated work setting in which individuals are working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment, that is individualized and customized consistent with the strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals involved, for individuals with the most significant disabilities—

(A) (i) for whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred; or

(ii) for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and

(B) who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services and extended services after the transition described in paragraph (13)(C), in order to perform the work involved.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(39)]

Supported Employment Services means ongoing support services, including customized employment, needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability in supported employment, that:

(A) are provided singly or in combination and are organized and made available in such a way as to assist an eligible individual to achieve competitive integrated employment;

(B) are based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an individualized plan for employment; and

(C) Are provided by the designated State unit for a period of not more than 24 months, except that period may be extended, if necessary, in order to achieve the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment.

TRANSITION SERVICES [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401(34)]

Transition Services means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability designed within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities is based on each student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, and includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

YOUTH WITH A DISABILITY [29 U.S.C. Sec. 705(42)]

Youth with a Disability means:

(A) IN GENERAL means an individual with a disability who:

(i) is not younger than 14 years of age; and

(ii) is not older than 24 years of age.

End Notes

[1] PACER Center Inc. (2001). Parent tips for transition planning, PHP-c80. Retrieved from **www.asec.net/Archives/Transitionresources/Parent%20tips%20for%20transition.pdf.**

[2] Adelman, C. (2006). The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from **www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/toolboxrevisit/toolbox.pdf**.

[3] U.S. Department of Education (2013, September). OSEP Letter to Dude; Retrieved on January 6, 2017 from **https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/11-007493r-co-dude-transition9-3-13.pdf**.

[4] National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. (2011). Engaging Youth in Work Experiences: An Innovative Strategies Practice Brief. Retrieved from **www.ncwd-youth.info/innovative-strategies/practice-briefs/engaging-youth-in-work-experiences.**

[5] National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. Guideposts for Success: Career Preparation & Work-Based Learning Experiences. Retrieved from **www.ncwd-youth.info/guideposts/career**.

[6] Luecking, R. G. (2009) The way to work: How to facilitate work experiences for youth in transition. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

[7] Powers, L.E., Deshler, D.D., Jones, B. & Simon, M. (2006). Strategies for enhancing self-determination, social success, and transition to adulthood. In D.D. Deshler and J.B. Schumaker (Eds.), *Teaching adolescents with disabilities: Accessing the general education curriculum* (pp 235–273). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

[8] Powers, L.E., Sowers, J., & Stevens, T. (1995). An exploratory, randomized study of the impact of mentoring on the self-efficacy and community-based knowledge of adolescents with severe physical challenges. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 61*(1), 33–41.

[9] Luecking, R. G. (2009) The way to work: How to facilitate work experiences for youth in transition. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

[10] Information in this section is based upon a Joint Dear Colleague letter on career pathways (OVAE, ETA, Administration for Children and Families). April 4, 2012. Retrieved from **www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/ten-attachment.pdf.**

[11] See Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities, Final Rule, *Analysis of Comments and Changes*, 71 Fed. Reg. 46540, 46667 (Aug. 14, 2006).

[12] Id.

[13] If the VR agency is operating under an order of selection, the IPE must be developed and approved before each eligible student meeting the order of selection criteria leaves the school setting. Section 101(a)(9)(A) of the *Rehabilitation Act* and 34 CFR §361.22(a)(2).

[14] See State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, 81 Fed. Reg. 55,687 (August 19, 2016)(Preamble).

[15] Adapted from: Alverson, C.Y., Burr, J., FitzGerald, P., Dickinson, J., Johnson, M., Ozols, K., & Simich, S. (2015). Oregon Youth Transitions Program (YTP) Procedures Manual. Retrieved from **www.ytporegon.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/Master%20Sep%209%20v5.pdf**. With further modifications from Brenda Kaye Simmons, Director, Transition Services, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation.

[16] Cameto, R., Levine, P., &Wagner, M. (2004). Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities. A Special Topic Report from the national Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NTS2). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

[17] Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 794, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities of entities such as public schools and State vocational rehabilitation agencies receiving Federal financial assistance. Title II of the *ADA* , as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12131 *et seq.*, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by State and local public entities, regardless of receipt of Federal funds. OCR shares enforcement responsibility for Title II in the education context with the U.S. Department of Justice. For more information about these laws, go to **www.ed.gov/ocr**

[18] Please visit **www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html** for a detailed overview of auxiliary aids and services.

[19] Please visit **https://acl.gov/Programs/AIDD/DDA_BOR_ACT_2000/index.aspx** for further information.

[20] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2011). Transition of Students With Disabilities to Postsecondary Education: A Guide for High School Educators. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from **www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transitionguide.html**.

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[22] Brolin, D. (1995). *Career education: A functional life skills approach* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

[23] Fabian, E. S., Edelman, A. & Leedy, M. (1993). Linking workers with severe disabilities to social supports in the workplace: Strategies for addressing barriers. The Journal of Rehabilitation, 59, 3 p. 29(6).

[24] Please visit the University of Washington DO-IT website (**www.washington.edu/doit/Careers/postsecondary_educators.html**) for further information.

[25] Please refer to the Report of the Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities (2011) (**www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/aim/meeting/aim-report.pdf**) for further information.

[26] In enacting the *IDEA* Amendments of 2004, Congress recognized that research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible, in order to (i) meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children; and (ii) be prepared to lead productive and independent adult lives, to the maximum extent possible. (Section 601(c) (5) (A) of the *IDEA*. As the graduation rates for children with disabilities continue to climb, providing effective transition services to promote successful post-school employment or education is an important measure of accountability for children with disabilities. Section 601(c)(14) of the *IDEA*.

[27] For additional information on College and Career Ready Standards and Assessments, please visit: **www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/faq/college-career.pdf**. For strategies regarding how to improve the learning of all students, please visit the ED's SWIFT Schools website: **www.swiftschools.org**.

[28] Bremer, C. D. & Smith, J. (2004). Teaching social skills. National Center on Secondary Education and Transition Information Brief, 3(5). Retrieved from **www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1749**.

[29] Bremer, C. D. & Smith, J. (2004). Teaching social skills. National Center on Secondary Education and Transition Information Brief, 3(5). Retrieved from **www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1749**

[30] Loman, S., Vatland, C., Strickland-Cohen, K, R., & Walker, H. (2010). Promoting self-determination: A practice guide. Retrieved from **http://ngsd.org/sites/default/files/promoting_self-determination_a_practice_guide.pdf**.

[31] Loman, S., Vatland, C., Strickland-Cohen, K., Horner, R., & Walker, H. (2010). Promoting self-determination: A practice guide. Retrieved from **http://ngsd.org/sites/default/files/promoting_self-determination_a_practice_guide.pdf**.

[32] Loman, S., Vatland, C., Strickland-Cohen, K., Horner, R., & Walker, H. (2010). Promoting self-Determination: A practice guide. Retrieved from **http://ngsd.org/sites/default/files/promoting_self-determination_a_practice_guide.pdf**.

[33] Loman, S., Vatland, C., Strickland-Cohen, K., Horner, R., & Walker, H. (2010). Promoting self-determination: A practice guide. Retrieved from **http://ngsd.org/sites/default/files/promoting_self-determination_a_practice_guide.pdf**. Please visit the U.S. Department of Education's Parent and Training Information (PTI) Centers for additional information on how parents can become more involved in developing students' self-determination **www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/resources.html**.

[34] U.S. Department of Education (2013, September). OSEP Letter to Dude. Retrieved on January 6, 2017 from **https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/11-007493r-co-dude-transition9-3-13.pdf**.

[35] Center for Parent Information and Resources (October 2015). Getting Ready for When Your Teen Reaches the Age of Majority: A Parent's Guide. Retrieved from **www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/age-of-majority-parentguide**.

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