

Student and Youth Transition Handbook



Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

Transforming lives

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Table of Contents

Introduction	i
Who is this Handbook intended for?	i
How can we work together?	i
Student? Youth? What's the difference?	ii
What are secondary transition services?	1
Who Is eligible to receive DVR transition services?	3
When do individualized DVR transition services begin?	6
IEP? IPE? What's the difference?	7
What's next? Developing the individual employment goal	8
What is the referral process for DVR?	8
Who makes the referral?	8
What happens after the referral?	9
Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Services	11
Department of Services for the Blind	12
Collaboration with the Developmental Disabilities Administration	13
What are the roles and responsibilities of schools and vocational rehabilitation?	15
What is education's role and responsibility for IDEA-eligible students?	15
How to find your school district's Special Education Coordinator	22
What are school responsibilities for 504-eligible students?	22
How to find your school district's 504 Coordinators	17
What DVR needs from 504 Coordinators	18
Post secondary education planning	18
DVR's role and responsibility	20
How to find your school's DVR Transition Liaison	21

Table of Contents

Entitlements, civil rights and eligibility: important differences	22
Age matters: What every family should know about timelines, financial concerns and signatures	23
Why it can be beneficial for certain special education students to stay in school past age 18.....	23
Why it may be beneficial to have your child apply for adult Social Security Disability benefits (SSI or SSDI) before their 18th birthday.....	24
When will a parent or legal guardian’s signature be required?.....	25
What federal laws apply to transition?	26
1. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004	26
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	27
3. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973	29
Related federal law — Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)	31
Unpaid community-based employment experiences	31
Where to find vocational rehabilitation resources in Washington state	33
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.....	33
American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs [Tribal VR].....	33
Department of Services for the Blind	33
What to do and when to do it: For students with intellectual or developmental disabilities	34
What to do and when to do it: For students eligible for an IEP and/or a Section 504 Plans	36
Acronyms and definitions	38
Acknowledgements	41

Introduction

Who is this handbook intended for?

The information provided in this handbook is intended for students and youth with disabilities, their families, staff from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), teachers, school counselors, school administrators, school district personnel, and other agencies supporting students and youth with disabilities who want to participate in secondary transition planning and services.

How can we work together?

Students, youth, families, and professionals can work together to:

- Promote collaborative planning and service delivery among vocational rehabilitation, school districts (also called LEAs), schools, and other county, state, and community agencies that serve students and youth transitioning from school to employment and/or post-school activities leading to employment;
- Encourage and consult with school districts to develop, implement and promote pre-vocational services and career exploration for students with disabilities; and
- Support accessible, timely, and culturally sensitive vocational rehabilitation services for all Washington State students with disabilities.

Student? Youth? What's the difference?

The Federal Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 2014 provide important definitions to keep in mind:

Student: A person still attending secondary school who has either a transition-focused Individualized Educational Program (IEP), **or** has a 504 plan. A student is typically age 16, but can be as young as 14 if they are on a school-based plan that includes transition services. A student is no older than age 21, or if they turn 22 while in their last year of school.

Youth: For purposes of DVR, a youth is a person between 16-24 who is in school but not on an IEP or a 504 plan - **or** is out of school. This handbook only addresses students and youth with disabilities, who are attending secondary school.

What are secondary transition services?

Secondary transition services help students and youth get ready for life after high school.

These services include preparing students and youth for independent living, employment, and/or post-secondary education.

Both DVR and schools provide transition services to students with disabilities. When a student or youth becomes eligible for DVR services, they work with their DVR counselor to develop an individualized plan for employment after graduation. Students with disabilities who meet the federal criteria for pre-employment transition services may also receive general DVR-funded services provided to groups, whether or not they have open cases with DVR. To read more about pre-employment transition services, see page 2.

DVR Transition Services

Vocational rehabilitation transition services help students and youth with disabilities prepare for and obtain competitive integrated employment. These may include vocational counseling and guidance, pre-employment transition services, independent living and self-advocacy instruction, benefits planning related to employment, assistive technology, post-secondary education or training, job placement, and other services leading to competitive employment. To help students and youth with disabilities gain an early start at job exploration, DVR services ideally begin before a student or youth graduates from school, and continue until competitive employment is obtained after graduation.



School-Based Transition Services

School-based transition services are provided under IDEA by schools to assist and support students with disabilities in preparing for employment. School activities may include but are not limited to developing independent living skills, providing career exploration, community and/or school-based work experiences to develop knowledge about work habits and responsibility, and academic preparation. Secondary school transition services are no longer provided when a student graduates or leaves school.

For applicable federal laws, see page 29.

What are Pre-Employment Transition Services?

Significant changes in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 2014 now provide VR agencies across the nation with the opportunity to provide expanded services in five specific focus areas to students with IEP or 504 plans, whether or not they have applied or been found eligible for DVR services.

These services can be provided to groups of students who are eligible or potentially eligible for DVR services, and also individually to students who have open cases with DVR.

The five pre-employment transition service areas include:

1. Job exploration;
2. Work-based learning experiences, which may be in-school or after-school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships) provided in integrated community settings;
3. Exploring opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive or post-secondary educational programs at higher education institutions;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
5. Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

Who is eligible to receive DVR transition services?

Any student or youth with a disability may be eligible. Transition services, as defined under the Rehabilitation Act, are provided to all eligible students and youth with disabilities.

This includes students within the special education system, as well as youth within the general education system. Students and youth with disabilities who are transitioning from state and local juvenile rehabilitation institutions and community programs also may be eligible for DVR transition services.

Secondary students who receive DVR transition services also have either Individual Education Programs (IEP) or 504 Plans. Other youth with medical or emotional conditions who don't have IEP or 504 Plans may also qualify for DVR services.

Examples of the range of possibilities include but are not limited to students with:

- mild conditions such as a hearing loss, a speech impairment, asthma/allergies, physical limitations that preclude them from some activities, emotional or mental health conditions,
- impairments in social interactions;
- learning disabilities;
- cognitive limitations;
- intellectual disabilities;
- students who need reasonable accommodations to participate in classroom and learning activities [a 504 Plan];
- a mental health diagnosis and
- youth that schools identify as high risk who may have disabilities not yet identified.





Under the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 2014, students or youth are eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services if they:

- have physical, mental or sensory impairment that results in a substantial barrier to employment; **and**
- need DVR services to prepare for, get or keep a job that matches their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and interests; **and**
- they are capable of working as a result of receiving VR services.

There is a presumption of eligibility for DVR services, if the student or youth is currently receiving and/or is entitled to Supplemental Security Income (**SSI**) **and/or** Social Security Disability Insurance (**SSDI**) benefits for disability or blindness, and intends to become employed. DVR is required to verify disability status and identify functional limitations.

In other words, a person must have a disability that interferes with the ability to work and must need vocational rehabilitation services to obtain or maintain employment. **A person is presumed to be able to become employed unless DVR has clear and convincing evidence that the person cannot become employed.**

Services for

Carmen

Carmen is 19. She's been in special education courses since the sixth grade, and now has a three-month-old daughter. Several credits short of high school graduation, she began working with her local DVR counselor. Through her counselor, Carmen was able to participate in a vocational evaluation, and then chose a course of study to become a certified nursing assistant.

The special education training specialist who worked with her was able to arrange short-term skills training, which allowed Carmen to obtain her certification. Because Carmen met the financial need criteria, DVR paid for her certification exam and work clothing required for employment.

Carmen's teacher helped her with getting graduation credits for some of her vocational and independent living activities, and by providing tutoring. Carmen's DVR counselor referred her to a mental health program to help her address barriers to employment related to her emotional challenges, with the adjustments transitioning from school to work, and assistance with parenting skills. DVR also helped Carmen receive assistance in job placement, and helped pay for child care during her first three months on the job.

When do individualized DVR transition services begin?

Typically, DVR counselors begin to work with secondary students and youth who are between the ages of 16-21, although students as young as age 14 can begin work with DVR if they have a school plan that focuses on post-secondary transition, and they need individualized services as a result of their barriers to employment. Students and youth must be ready and available to actively engage in DVR services. This includes activities necessary to establish an employment goal, develop an employment plan, and participate in vocational rehabilitation services that are required to become employed.

The Federal Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 2014, prohibits DVR from providing or paying for any transition services that are considered to be special education or related services that schools are required to provide. The goal of both schools and DVR is to work together to make sure students are able to become employed after graduation. Schools and DVR negotiate how these services are provided.



Students and youth who are interested in post-school employment, and who need specific services to meet their goals are able to apply for DVR services while still in school. If a student or youth has a DVR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), these services can continue after graduation until the IPE goals are met.

The primary role of the DVR counselor is to provide vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance that helps students and youth with disabilities make informed choices about their job goals and career paths to adulthood. DVR Counselors also provide consultation and technical assistance to schools to plan for transition of students and youth with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation.

DVR counselors visit schools to share information about vocational rehabilitation with students and youth, teachers, parents, and/or school counselors. When appropriate and feasible, DVR counselors may participate in student Individualized Education Program [IEP] meetings. If requested, DVR counselors also attend other activities such as person-centered planning meetings, family nights, transition fairs, and other activities focused on post-school employment.

Unconfusing IEP and IPE

Schools: IEP = Individual Education Program

DVR: IPE = Individualized Plan for Employment

Both DVR and school districts aim to have the DVR employment plan developed and approved before students leave high school. This plan is called the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). For special education students, the IPE is coordinated with the student's IEP. The DVR IPE should be developed prior to school exit.

What's next?

Developing the individual employment goal

The first step to helping a student or youth develop an individualized employment goal is to be found eligible for services from DVR. This is the job of the DVR counselor. Then the student or youth works with their counselor to identify a job goal. Students or youth may participate in various vocational assessments, pre-employment transition services, and other activities. Once the job goal is agreed upon, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed. The IPE identifies steps and services needed to reach the goal.

If post-secondary education or training is required to achieve the person's job goal, DVR is required to look at comparable benefits, and will ask the student or youth to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) available at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. This application is mandatory at any college if a person wants to be considered for financial aid, work study, and/or loans. The college financial aid office is a good place to learn about scholarships and grants that might be available. All DVR services, including post-secondary education, must be directly related to an employment goal.

What is the referral process for DVR?

Who makes the referral?

Referral to DVR may be initiated by anyone at any time. Typically, referrals come from schools, students or youth, family members, county developmental disabilities programs, community agencies, or from case managers at other state agencies such as the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). Students and youth referred to DVR may be participants in special, career and technical, or general education programs.

What happens after referral?

The process for referring students and youth to DVR continues with the DVR counselor discussing the potential referral with the student/youth and their family. If the discussion results in a decision to apply for DVR services, the student or youth signs an application, and the DVR counselor gathers documents to establish the student or youth's eligibility. If the student or youth is under age 18, that person's parent or guardian must also sign the application. Documents may come from the school and/or medical providers. The school or DVR may request written parental consent for the release of documentation of their child's disability.

People who are interested in applying for DVR services are typically invited to attend a DVR orientation at a local office. In most rural areas, DVR performs individual orientations and intake. If the student or youth is in school, DVR coordinates with the school and provides those services on site.

Working with all involved, the DVR Counselor will identify and coordinate any diagnostic assessments needed to determine eligibility and plan for DVR services.

After a student or youth has applied for DVR services and signed a release of information, the DVR counselor may need some of the most current information listed below in order to determine eligibility for DVR. Often student/youth school files compiled by school transition specialists, special education teachers/case managers, or 504 Plan Coordinators may contain this information, which may include:

- The most recent comprehensive psychological or psycho-educational evaluation report
- Medical and specialty evaluation reports such as adaptive behavior, mobility, speech and language, hearing, mental health assessment and treatment plan, drug and alcohol records, etc.
- The last two IEPs (for historical perspective)
- The 504 plan, if applicable

- School transcripts, if appropriate
- Vocational assessment results, including functional vocational evaluation
- Career interest/aptitude testing results
- Information regarding the student or youth's prevocational and vocational activities through the school, including community experiences and school-to-career activities
- PSAT/SAT results

For a parental/family member referral: see DVR's website (www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr) for a list of offices near you or call 1-800-637-5627 (Voice/TTY).

Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Several American Indian tribes in Washington State have Tribal American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services programs (AIVRS or TVR) federally funded through Section 121 of the Rehabilitation Act. They provide services to American Indians with disabilities who are seeking employment, are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe, and are living on or near a reservation in the service area of one of the TVR programs.

Tribal VR programs are able to provide cultural resources to American Indians with disabilities on their paths to employment. They understand how to integrate indigenous values and practices into helping Native students and youth transition. AIVRS is comparable to Washington State VR services with the use of additional tribal resources and other culturally related services that strengthen and support American Indians with disabilities in achieving their employment goals.

An enrolled tribal member living on or near a reservation in the service area of a TVR program has the choice of receiving services from either a Tribal VR program, from the Washington State VR program, or both. TVR programs can work with both public and tribal schools, as well as work side-by-side with DVR's transition liaison for the high school. Contact information for Washington State TVR programs is found at the end of this handbook.



Department of Services for the Blind

Washington State's Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) provides what they call *one front door* for people of all ages who are blind or have low vision in the state of Washington. All students or youth who are blind or have low vision, are age 14 or older, and attend public or private schools in Washington State may be referred for transition services to the DSB Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. DSB services include pre-plan assessment, Individual Education Program (IEP) consultation, vocational exploration, counseling and guidance, assistive technology consultation and support, and IPE (Individual Plan for Employment) development prior to high school graduation.

DSB also offers summer youth programs for students ages 9-21 to develop and strengthen their independent daily living skills, provide work experiences, and help youth build the necessary abilities to prepare for the career of their choice. In some cases, DSB and DVR may jointly serve the same person when VR services from both agencies are needed. Contact information for DSB can be found at the end of this handbook.



Collaboration with the Developmental Disabilities Administration

DVR works closely with schools, the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), and County Developmental Disabilities Programs to support eligible students and youth with significant cognitive, physical and neurological impairments in making the most of their school years and achieving their employment goals.

In order to receive employment support services as adults (after age 21) from the DDA, students need to have their eligibility determined for these services. If a student is found eligible, each DDA client's service needs are determined through an assessment process and services are authorized based on identified needs. If found eligible and services are authorized, **DDA employment services begin after the student has exited school and is age 21.**

Some counties in Washington State have collaborative agreements with school districts, employment agencies and DVR to help students and youth with developmental disabilities get head starts on their careers. More information can be found by contacting the county DD Programs. A website with the county contact information is here: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda>

See Developmental Disabilities Life Opportunities Trust (DDLOT) on page 44.

Services for *Charlie*

Charlie is a 17-year-old high school junior with a learning disability and low vision. His choice to take academic classes has required intensive resource room support to achieve passing grades, and he plans to graduate with his class in three semesters.

Charlie wants to attend community college, and scored well on his PSAT test. Currently he is seeing his school counselor to discuss difficulties related to his progressive vision loss. Charlie's school referred him to the **Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)** for assistance with his plans and has updated his educational, vocational and vision assessments that show he is most likely to be successful in an academic setting with the support of a tutor and assistive technology.

Charlie, his parents, his DSB counselor, and the school team developed Charlie's Individualized Education Program, which includes six weeks at the DSB residential work experience program.

After the school works with Charlie to develop a vocational goal for his IEP, Charlie, his family, and his DSB counselor will work together to write his Individualized Education Plan for Employment. They will also assess his eligibility for financial assistance and college entrance requirements. When Charlie is finished with school, DSB will help him with job placement.

What are the roles and responsibilities of schools and vocational rehabilitation?

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) [Washington's State Education Agency (SEA)] and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs are responsible for providing transition services to students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws.

What is education's role and responsibility for IDEA-eligible students?

OSPI is responsible for ensuring school districts develop Individualized Education Programs [IEPs] for all students with disabilities eligible for special education. The IEP must include transition services for students by their 16th birthday, or sooner if the IEP team chooses, and are to be developed with students and their families.

Activities while in school may include, but are not limited to, career exploration, community-based work experiences, and activities providing knowledge about work habits and responsibility. School districts are responsible for providing transition services for students eligible for special education. The focus is on improving student academic and functional achievement to help them move from school to post-school activities.

Post-school activities include post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

The IEP must include applicable measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments that relate to training, education, employment, and independent living skills.

Transition services must also:

- Include a course of study needed to assist the student in reaching postsecondary goals;
- Be individualized according to the needs, strengths, preferences and interests of individual students and facilitate movement from school to post-school goals;
- Include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

For more information about transition services and resources in your area please see the Center for Change in Transition Services website: <http://www.seattleu.edu/ccts>.

How to find your school district's Special Education Coordinator

Go to: <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/publications.aspx>. Click on the "Directory: Special Education and Institutional Education Directory" link. Scroll down through the alphabetical listing of school districts to locate your local school district contact information.

What are school responsibilities for 504-eligible students?

Many students who have or could benefit from a 504 plan have what are often considered "invisible" disabilities, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), behavioral, emotional or mental health disabilities, or specific learning disabilities.

A 504 Plan is developed by school staff with each 504-eligible student to provide accommodations, aids, and services designed to meet the individual student's needs to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met for educational and school activities. This is sometimes referred to as a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Federal funding is not available for the implementation of this civil rights statute. This differs from students eligible for special education, where federal funds are available.

To be protected under Section 504 a student must:

- 1) Have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; or
- 2) Have a record of the impairment; or
- 3) Be regarded as having the impairment.

The impairment doesn't need to prevent or severely or significantly restrict a major life activity to be considered substantially limiting. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and major bodily functions such as the functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

How to find your school district's 504 Coordinators

Each school district is required to designate a staff member as a 504 Coordinator to oversee the protection of civil rights for students with disabilities eligible for 504 services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Go to the list published by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Equity and Civil Rights Office at: www.k12.wa.us/Equity/ContactList.aspx.

More general information on Section 504 may be found at:
<http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/Families/Section504.aspx>.

For more information: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

What DVR needs from 504 Coordinators

DVR is required to annually share information about vocational rehabilitation with students eligible for DVR transition services. DVR relies on school district staff to identify which 504-eligible students may be interested in DVR services.

In order to help 504-eligible students and their families learn about DVR, the 504 Coordinator could:

- Schedule a time for the school's DVR Transition Liaison to share information about DVR with 504-eligible students;
- Share DVR transition brochures and this transition handbook with 504-eligible students and their families;
- Invite the school's DVR Transition Liaison to talk about DVR at a school or district staff meeting, a PTSA meeting or other meetings of people who may be working with 504-eligible students; and/or
- Seek parental or guardian written consent to share with DVR the names of 504-eligible students who may be eligible for DVR services, so the DVR Transition Liaison assigned to that school may follow up with the student.

Students with 504 plans are involved in the DVR process in the same way as other DVR consumers, and can benefit from prevocational activities through the school district to help with the transition process to postsecondary activities such as work, apprenticeships, and/or college.

Post-secondary education planning

If a student or youth intends to engage in post-secondary education, the school district can assist many students or youth in this transition by ensuring that an educational evaluation has been completed after age 16. Many testing agencies - such as the College Board that provides PSAT and SAT testing - require an updated evaluation when testing accommodations are requested. Post-secondary training programs such as universities, community colleges, and trade schools often require an updated assessment in order to obtain classroom or other disability accommodations through that school's disability resource center.

DVR's role and responsibility

DVR must provide information about the purpose of vocational rehabilitation, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the scope of vocational rehabilitation services available to students or youth with disabilities, including those in special education and those eligible for a Section 504 plans.

Students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for DVR services may also receive pre-employment transition services provided most often as general services in group settings. Please check with your local DVR office for more information about pre-employment transition services activities in your community. If a student requires more intensive services to become employed after graduation, they may also apply for individualized DVR services.

Individualized transition services provided by DVR must lead to an employment outcome. These services may include:

- Consultation and technical assistance as early as possible in the transition process to assist education providers in planning for the transition of a student or youth from school to post-school activities including post-secondary education, employment, and vocational rehabilitation
- Joint planning to facilitate the development and completion of the IEP
- Determination of eligibility for DVR services
- Identification of a suitable employment outcome
- Development of an Individualized Plan for Employment [IPE] before the student or youth leaves school
- Provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services, as appropriate to the individual needs of the student or youth

Please see WAC 388-891-0600 for list of possible DVR services:

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-891-0600>



How to find your school's DVR Transition Liaison

Go to: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/RA/dvr/school-transition>. Click on your county on DVR's school transition internet page. As you scroll down the page, you should find your school and its DVR Transition Liaison. If your school is not listed, contact the DVR office nearest you, or call DVR state headquarters to be connected to the correct office.

Many areas of services overlap, and may be shared by education and vocational rehabilitation. Specific individual needs may also be served by more than one VR program, such as Tribal VR and DVR, in cooperation with the student's school district.

DVR encourages its staff to work with counties and school districts to ensure that students in transition through an Extended School Year program (ESY) to age 21 have access to work experience in competitive, integrated work settings. **Varied work experiences prior to leaving secondary school are a strong indicator of successful employment as an adult.**

Services for *Tim*

Seventeen-year-old Tim has mild cerebral palsy. He lives in rural Washington, about an hour and a half away from the nearest DVR office.

Tim receives educational accommodations through a 504 plan, which is for students with certain types of challenges. He is struggling with the physical demands of auto shop classes, so Tim's teacher suggested he learn about other options available through vocational rehabilitation. Tim's guidance counselor also helped him and his parents gather information on services and DVR eligibility.

The DVR counselor in Tim's area gives a presentation each semester at middle and high school family information nights. After their attendance at the most recent DVR presentation, Tim, his parents, and his guidance counselor made an intake appointment with the DVR counselor. The guidance counselor further assisted Tim and his parents in collecting school assessment information to assist DVR with Tim's eligibility determination, and prepared a referral packet to send to the DVR counselor prior to Tim's intake meeting.

Entitlement, civil rights and eligibility: There are important differences

Entitlements and civil rights = Automatic access to services

Students qualifying for special education services are **entitled** to the services based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 2004. IDEA defines *special education* as “specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of a child with a disability.”

Schools are responsible for developing 504 Plans as the basis for providing accommodations for students with disabilities so they may fully participate in education and school activities. This is a student civil right based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Eligibility = Must qualify for services

Students and youth must be found **eligible** to receive services through DVR. This differs from student and youth entitlement to receive free and appropriate public education services through school districts.

People who may need support from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) **may apply for eligibility determination** at any age — **from birth on up**. Even if a family has not received support from DDA during a person’s young childhood, they are encouraged to consider applying for eligibility for DDA services during their child’s teen years.

DDA-funded employment services will not begin until a student has exited school and turned 21 years of age, but counties and case managers may be able to get involved at a younger age. In counties with collaborative transition projects, DDA eligibility is required.

Age matters: What every family should know about timelines, financial concerns and signatures

Why it can be beneficial for certain special education students to stay in high school until age 21

IDEA is designed and funded for schools to educate and work with students ages 18-21 to prepare them for employment and/or post-secondary education. **Every year of career preparation matters, and there are no other entitlement services to replace school opportunities. Because DDA employment support begins at age 21, it is important to avoid a gap between school and employment, particularly if students leave high school before age 21.** It is important to maintain continuity for employment supports for students in their transition from school to their adult lives.

Students in special education may often complete most of their academic requirements by age 18, and then use the school years from ages 18-21 to develop work skills, more robust independent living skills, and have a variety of work experiences that often lead to ongoing employment. **These “extra” high school years can help prepare students for employment and the challenges of adulthood.**

After students with the most significant disabilities find employment, they may need long-term supports - such as job coaching - to maintain their employment over time and/or successfully adjust to changes at the work place. These are called supported employment services. In these cases, DVR provides initial services and funding to help students get and keep their jobs. Extended services are then provided and funded by another individual, program or agency to help students maintain their employment.

There are a number of ways to provide extended services, including private payment, social security work incentives, and funding from the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). It is important to remember DDA employment funding can only be authorized if the young adult is age 21 or older and has exited school. All resources and strategies for long term support need to be explored.

Important note: A special education student may be eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) services up to age 21 through the school district **with or without having developmental disabilities**.

Why it may be beneficial for students to apply for adult Social Security Disability benefits (SSI or SSDI) before their 18th birthdays:

When students or youth apply for DVR services, the income of their whole family will be considered when determining any financial contribution for DVR services. If students or youth are receiving SSI or SSDI as adults, only their income is considered. Recipients of SSI/SSDI are presumed eligible for VR services and not required to financially contribute to the VR services they receive. **When students or youth become adults, they will need to prove their eligibility for services.** They are not automatically entitled to services as may have been true while they were in high school.

Other benefits for people who receive SSI/SSDI may be work incentives such as a Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency (PASS) or an Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE) plan. Developing an applicable plan is another way people can pay for their own long term job coaching needs when other extended supports are not available.

If a student or youth decides to apply for adult disability benefits, the Social Security Administration (SSA) recommends beginning the SSI/SSDI application process six months before their 18th birthday. Since family income and resources are considered before an SSA applicant turns 18, some benefits planners recommend beginning the application process from two months prior to their 18th birthday to the first full month after they are 18 years old.

When will a parent or legal guardian's signature be required?

For school IEP meetings: **Before a student's 18th birthday**, schools require a signed release from the student's parent or legal guardian to allow a DVR counselor to attend that student's IEP meeting.

For Vocational Rehabilitation Services: **Before a student or youth's 18th birthday, VR requires** a parent or legal guardian sign the necessary forms (such as, application for services, consent forms). DVR is required to keep a copy of guardianship papers on file. Please bring them to your first meeting with the counselor.

It may be beneficial to have your child apply for adult SSI or SSDI benefits before their 18th birthday.



What federal laws apply to transition?

Transition services are required and/or guided by these federal laws:

1. Schools are guided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 2004, <http://idea.ed.gov>.
2. Students with disabilities in schools who do not meet the criteria for an Individual Education Program [IEP] are covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>.
3. All vocational rehabilitation is guided by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/special/reg/narrative.html>.

1. Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004

- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Parents Rights for Dispute Resolution under IDEA
- Student Participation

Free Appropriate Public Education

All students and youth determined eligible to receive special education or a Section 504 Plan are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment. This means the families of students and youth with disabilities may not be charged for their child's education or related services, and the educational services must be appropriate and provided in conformity with the student's IEP and/or 504 Plan. To the maximum extent possible, students and youth with disabilities are to be educated with students who do not have disabilities.

Students and youth with disabilities are entitled to FAPE while in K -12 schooling. This differs from post-secondary programs and activities where entitlements usually do not exist. Families familiar with their children being entitled to education services are often surprised when adult services such as DVR require proof of eligibility, and that may require families to contribute financially for some of the services their child receives.

Parent rights for dispute resolution under IDEA

IDEA provides procedures for resolving disputes between parents and schools regarding educational services to students with disabilities; this includes transition services. Dispute procedures include voluntary mediation, federal complaint processes, and due process hearings. Informed parents can help assure their child is receiving all of the support to which they are entitled.

Student participation

Beginning at the age of 16 (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team), the school district must invite students to attend IEP meetings whenever transition services are discussed. If a student is not able to attend, the school must take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered.

2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

More detail with Internet links may be found on pages 14-15.



Services for *Amy*

Twenty-one-year-old Amy was identified with an intellectual disability when she was in first grade. She receives educational services in a school-based transition program for 18-21 year olds who have completed their academic programs, and who are ready to concentrate on the work-related transition skills and experiences needed to achieve their post-school outcomes.

The school program includes life skills instruction, work readiness, and work experience opportunities. Throughout the last several years, her school district provided Amy with a formal vocational assessment and career exploration services. She worked at three in-school placements before she entered the transition program, which is not located at her high school.

Attending the program at a different location helps Amy experience this time as a step in her path to adulthood. Last year, her teacher located a community work experience as a mail clerk. Amy received job coaching from the school paraprofessional, and has expressed an interest in pursuing this type of work on a permanent basis. This will require coaching when she is placed in a new position, because she has difficulty learning new tasks. Amy applied for and was found eligible for DVR services. Amy and her parents attended a DVR intake meeting and discussed the employment plan with her DVR Counselor.

To help her seek employment, Amy's DVR counselor, plus an employment specialist from a Community Rehabilitation Program (funded initially by DVR and long term by DDA) and the school district's Transition Program staff will share job placement responsibilities. Amy's IPE indicates that DVR will provide job coaching when a job placement is found. Because she is eligible for long-term job support from DDA, Amy's DDA case manager will authorize job follow-along activities.

Amy plans to use public transportation to get to work when she finds a job. Because of her family's financial need, DVR will purchase a bus pass for Amy, and the school district will help her to learn how to use the bus.

3. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

Key components of the Rehabilitation Act include:

- Informed Choice
- Competitive, Integrated Employment
- Comparable Benefits, Individual Contribution and Cost Considerations
- Consumer Rights and Responsibilities
- Case Closure

Informed Choice

Throughout involvement with DVR, a transitioning student or youth is provided opportunities and assistance to exercise informed choice. Students and youth are encouraged to consider a variety of choices during assessment, when determining an employment goal, when working with DVR to create an employment plan, in selecting services and service providers, and in determining successful case closure.

Competitive, Integrated Employment

DVR only assists individuals to obtain competitive employment in integrated settings. This means a job that pays the same wages and benefits to employees with disabilities as paid to employees without disabilities doing similar work. The work setting must include the same amount of contact with non-disabled people as other employees without disabilities experience on the job.

Comparable Benefits and Individual Contribution

Comparable benefits available under another program (such as Student Financial Aid, medical benefits, etc.) must be used to pay for certain DVR services, unless the benefits will interfere with or delay services such as: when an individual is at extreme medical risk; for an immediate job placement; or in progressing toward a student's IPE employment goal. Some DVR services consider the economic need of the individual with a disability and their family unit. Parents are considered part of a young adult's family unit until the young adult reaches age 24, if they are claiming the young adult as a dependent for income tax purposes. **Post-secondary schools consider this regardless of dependent status on federal taxes and until the student reaches age 24.**



Based on a determination of economic need, the available monthly resources of the family unit must be applied to a student or youth's vocational rehabilitation program (for some services). The exception to this requirement occurs if a young adult is receiving disability-related benefits through the Social Security Administration, Medicaid, or public assistance monetary supports, SSI, or SSDI. In these cases, DVR does not require students or their parents to contribute to the cost of DVR services.

Consumer rights and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all people receiving DVR services to be active participants in developing and following their IPEs. A person can appeal any decision at any time by talking with DVR, by requesting mediation, by contacting the Washington Client Assistance Program (CAP) for assistance with the issue and for advocacy services, and/or by filing a formal appeal through the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH).

Case closure

The purpose of Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is to empower people with disabilities to achieve a greater quality of life by obtaining and maintaining employment. Different than other programs like DDA, DVR services are not ongoing lifetime services.

A DVR consumer's case will be closed upon successful job retention or closed for other reasons, if an employment outcome is not achieved. A DVR consumer may request DVR services again in the event they lose or are in danger of losing employment due to a disability-related reason and requires DVR services to either maintain employment or obtain another job in the event of job loss. A new DVR case may be opened for a former DVR consumer who sustains a new/additional disability that impacts their ability to continue their current employment, or if the person requires assistance to obtain employment that better matches their strengths and skills.

Ideally, a case will be closed as "successfully rehabilitated" (meaning employed for 90 days following stability) when the person, the DVR counselor, and others working with the person agree that they have reached their employment goal and no longer requires DVR services to maintain employment. A DVR case file can also be closed because someone is ineligible for DVR services, or for other reasons such as refusing services or failure to cooperate.

Related federal law — Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Unpaid community-based employment experiences

The U.S. Department of Labor has specific guidelines for students, youth, and adults receiving vocational experiences in businesses without pay. Whenever an employment relationship exists, an employer will be held responsible to fully comply with all applicable sections of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This means the employer is required to compensate the individual unless all of the following criteria for a non-employment relationship are met. These guidelines prevent students and vocational rehabilitation consumers from being used as “free labor” and/or displacing other workers. Unpaid community based work experiences can be beneficial to a person’s vocational development and are allowed for vocational exploration, assessment and training. They include requirements that:

- The community based placement is documented and clearly defined on the individual’s IEP, vocational rehabilitation assessment, and/or IPE
- The individual does not displace or reduce the hours of an existing employee
- The individual will be under direct supervision by a school representative, a vocational rehabilitation service provider, or an employee of the business
- The activities of the individual do not result in an immediate advantage to the business, or the advantage is clearly offset by the burden of training and supervision



- The individual is working for training purposes and does not expect, or is not entitled to, a position after completion of the experience
- The individual voluntarily participates in the training with the understanding that no wages or benefits will be available for this vocational experience
- The length of the work experience is determined by the nature of the expected result. The individual engaged in a job shadow or career awareness experience would normally not be on the job site for more than a regular work shift. An individual engaged in a vocational assessment or work adjustment/job skill training may require a longer period depending on the objectives of the learning program

For additional information, refer to the Washington Department of Labor and Industries website: www.lni.wa.gov and the Federal Department of Labor website: www.dol.gov.



There are specific guidelines for students and adults receiving vocational experiences in businesses without pay.

Where to find Vocational Rehabilitation resources in Washington state

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Call 1-800-637-5627 to learn the location and contact information of the office closest to you. You can also find this information at www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr along with our transition video and other helpful information.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs [Tribal VR]

At the time of this printing, there are eight Tribal VR programs in Washington State. You can find an updated list of these programs at either <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/division-vocational-rehabilitation/tribal-vr-programs-partners-washington-state-vocational-rehabilitation> or at www.canar.org

Colville Confederated Tribes

(509) 634-2723

Lummi Vocational Rehabilitation Program

(360) 312-2079

Samish Indian Nation

(360) 899-5282

North Intertribal Vocational Rehabilitation

(360) 671-7626

Yakama Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

(509) 865-5121

Cowlitz Indian Tribe

(360) 575-6220

Skokomish and Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation

(360) 426-7788

Spokane Tribe of Indians






(509) 258-7502

Department of Services for the Blind

Call 1-800-552-7104 or email info@dsb.wa.gov to find the office closest to you. You can learn more about DSB at www.dsb.wa.gov.

What to do and when to do it: For students with intellectual or developmental disabilities

If your student or youth experiences a developmental disability, a suggested timeline of activities includes:

AGE		
15-16	<p>Apply for a Washington State I.D. card.</p> <p>Why: It will be needed to apply for adult services.</p>	 <p>• Get an I.D. card at your local Department of Licensing</p>
16	<p>Apply to become a client of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).</p> <p>Why: You may want these service options when your son/daughter turns 21. Long term job coaching support is based on availability of funding.</p>	 <p>• www.dshs.wa.gov/ddd/</p>
14-21 middle/ high school	<p>Contact the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR).</p> <p>Why: This agency helps people with disabilities become employed and understands how working will affect people's benefits.</p>	 <p>• www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr/</p>
17-17½	<p>Consider if guardianship is necessary and determine the type of guardianship.</p> <p>Why: Age 18 is the age of majority (becoming a legal adult) and your son/daughter may need support making legal, medical and vocational decisions.</p>	<p>Guardianship</p>
17-19	<p>Apply for HUD Housing.</p> <p>Why: The wait list for housing can be very long, so it is important to apply early.</p>	
18	<p>If your child does not receive Social Security Benefits – apply now!</p> <p>Why: He or she is now an adult and parents' income is not counted. He/she may be eligible for cash and medical benefits. There are many provisions available, called WORK INCENTIVES, that allow people with disabilities to keep benefits, including Medicare/Medicaid, while working.</p> <p><i>He or she needs to pay rent to the family in order to maximize all benefits.</i></p>	

AGE		
18	<p>Ask your DDA case manager about Medicaid Personal Care funding if your son or daughter is a client of DDA and the family provides personal care (help with bathing, grooming, dressing, laundry, etc.).</p>	<p>Medicaid Personal Care Funding</p>
Young Men 18	<p>Register for Selective Services.</p> <p>Why: It's the law. Also, if planning to apply for financial aid to attend college, applying for Selective Service is required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply on line at: http://www.sss.gov • Get a form from your local post office. • Return the form that comes in the mail.
Senior Year	<p>Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).</p> <p>Why: If seeking aid to attend college, this form must be filled out by March 1 of Senior year for best consideration.</p>	<p>FSA FEDERAL STUDENT AID</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.fafsa.ed.gov
Anytime	<p>Apply for job search assistance with WorkSource Youth Services.</p> <p>Why: This is the local program that can help self-directed job seekers find part time and/or summer employment to help develop work skills.</p>	<p>WorkSource Washington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.go2worksource.com
Anytime	<p>Call for local transit system bus Travel Training and Paratransit services</p> <p>Why: This is free training for people who want to learn to be independent on the bus and flexible alternative public transportation for people with disabilities and the elderly.</p>	<p>Travel Training & Paratransit Services</p>
Anytime	<p>Apply for services at a local Center for Independent Living (CIL). The State Independent Living Council [SILC] can help you find local resources.</p> <p>Why: These organizations provide support for independent living skills development, advocacy, and benefits planning.</p>	<p>SILC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.wasilc.org

What to do and when to do it: For students eligible for IEP and/or Section 504 Plans

If your child is entitled to an IEP, a Section 504 Plan and/or has a disability, a suggested timeline of activities includes:




AGE		
15-16	<p>Apply for a Washington State I.D. card.</p> <p>Why: It will be needed to apply for adult services.</p>	 <p>• Get an I.D. card at your local Department of Licensing</p>
14-21 middle/ high school	<p>Contact the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR).</p> <p>Why: This agency helps people with disabilities become employed and understands how working will affect people's benefits.</p>	 <p>• www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr/</p>
Sophomore Year	<p>Apply to join the University of Washington DO-IT Scholars Program before January deadline.</p> <p>Why: This program prepares young people with disabilities for college, careers, independent living and leadership roles in society. DO-IT Scholars explore careers and the world of work, learn to select and use adaptive technology, applications software, and Internet resources.</p>	 <p>1-888-972-DOIT</p>
16	<p>Apply to become a client of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).</p> <p>Why: You may want these service options when your son/daughter turns 21. Long term job coaching support is based on availability of funding.</p>	 <p>• www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/</p>
17-19	<p>Apply for HUD Housing.</p> <p>Why: The wait list for housing can be very long, so it is important to apply early.</p>	
18	<p>If your child does not receive Social Security Benefits – apply now!</p> <p>Why: He or she is now an adult and parents' income is not counted. He/she may be eligible for cash and medical benefits. There are many provisions available, called WORK INCENTIVES, that allow people with disabilities to keep benefits, including Medicare/Medicaid, while working.</p> <p><i>He or she needs to pay rent to the family in order to maximize all benefits.</i></p>	

504

Section 504

504

See pages 16-17 of this booklet for more information of “504 Eligible Students.”

AGE		
18	<p>Register for Selective Services.</p> <p>Why: It's the law. Also, if planning to apply for financial aid to attend college, applying for Selective Service is required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply on line at: http://www.sss.gov • Get a form from your local post office. • Return the form that comes in the mail.
Senior Year	<p>Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).</p> <p>Why: If seeking aid to attend college, this form must be filled out by March 1 of Senior year for best consideration.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.fafsa.ed.gov
Anytime	<p>Apply for job search assistance with WorkSource Youth Services.</p> <p>Why: This is the local program that can help self-directed job seekers find part time and/or summer employment to help develop work skills.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.go2worksource.com
Anytime	<p>Call for local transit system bus Travel Training and Paratransit services</p> <p>Why: This is free training for people who want to learn to be independent on the bus and flexible alternative public transportation for people with disabilities and the elderly.</p>	<p>Travel Training & Paratransit Services</p>
Anytime	<p>Apply for services at a local Center for Independent Living (CIL). The State Independent Living Council [SILC] can help you find local resources.</p> <p>Why: These organizations provide support for independent living skills development, advocacy, and benefits planning.</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.wasilc.org

Acronyms and Definitions

AIVRS or TVR - American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services or Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs are vocational rehabilitation services offered by tribes receiving federal grants to serve federally enrolled American Indians.

CAP – Client Assistance Program

Comparable Services and Benefits – are a) provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other federal, state or local public agencies, by health insurance or by employee benefits; b) available to the DVR customer at the time needed to insure progress toward achieving the employment outcome in the customer's IPE; and c) similar to the services the customer would receive from DVR.

CRP – Community Rehabilitation Providers are agencies and organizations that provide employment supports such as job coaching, job placement, work exploration, etc. They may be funded by schools, DVR, DDA and/or county DD offices or MH services.

DDA – Developmental Disabilities Administration

DDLOT – Developmental Disabilities Life Opportunities Trust, www.ddlot.org, allows individuals with developmental disabilities or their families to set aside funds for future use without affecting their eligibility for government services and benefits.

DSB – Department of Services for the Blind

DVR – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



ESY – Extended School Year is a school based program that may provide a student or youth with services during summer months. ESY programming should be offered to a student who has a decline in academic, social and/or related knowledge and skills outlined in their IEP due to an interruption in education, and who needs time and services to regain their prior level of functioning. Sometimes a youth is in a critical stage of developing a skill that has the potential for increasing their self-sufficiency: if such a skill is not completely acquired and mastered, it is likely the current level of acquisition will be lost due to the interruption of summer vacation. ESY programs are developed differently by each school district and so vary significantly in scope and style.

FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education is an educational right of children with disabilities in the United States that is guaranteed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

IDEA – the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is a federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

IEP – An Individual Education Program is a written statement school districts develop at least annually with each parent and youth receiving special education. It addresses the annual academic and functional achievement goals and related services for a student in special education.

IPE – An Individualized Plan for Employment, defined in WAC 388-891-1115, is a plan that documents important decisions a vocational rehabilitation customer and counselor make about vocational rehabilitation services.

OSPI – The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is Washington's State Education Agency

PETS – is the acronym for pre-employment transition services.

Related Services – means transportation and other developmental, corrective, or other supportive services required to assist a student to benefit from the provision of specially designed instruction.

Retraining – is the process of learning a new skill or trade, often in response to a change in the economic environment.

SSI – Supplemental Security Income is a federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues [not Social Security taxes) designed to help aged, blind and disabled people who have little or no income; and provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter.

SSDI – Social Security Disability Insurance is a federally run benefits program financed by the Social Security tax that provides aid to people who have a history of working and are currently unable to work due to a permanent disabling condition.

Secondary School – is the definition of school for people from 7th grade until high school graduation.

Supported Employment – See WAC 388-891-0800,
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=388-891-0800>

Transition Services – (Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 2014) (55) Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student or youth with a disability that are:

- (i) Designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
- (ii) Based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests;
- (iii) That includes instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation; and
- (iv) That promotes or facilitates the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's individualized plan for employment.

VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

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Permission to copy this handbook is granted.

Download at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/JJRA/dvr/school-transition>



**Helping secondary
school students
and youth with
disabilities prepare
for employment.**

