



# Transition Planning: from school to adult life

## What is transition planning and why is it important?

All students wonder, “What am I going to do with my life after school?” Schools use the transition planning process to help students with disabilities and their families plan for life after high school. There are many Medicaid funded and New York State funded supports and services available for young adults with developmental disabilities during and after high school. Students and families must apply for these services and may need to apply for Medicaid, if the services they are interested in require it.

School services are available to students with disabilities until they graduate with a Regents or local diploma, or their access to a free appropriate public education ends. However, each student should have a transition plan in place by age 15 or earlier to ensure that services will be available when they need them.

### Who can help with transition planning?

People who will help you learn about your choices include your high school guidance counselor, teachers, other school staff, family, and friends. A strong circle of support can help with the transition planning process. A circle of support is a group of people that you have freely chosen who help you think about your interests and goals, put them into words and make them happen. You choose the members of your circle of support.

**The transition planning process** can help you decide what you want to do after completing school. You may be interested in:

- Going to college or to a vocational or technical school
- Working in a community business
- Starting your own business
- Volunteering in your community
- Taking part in the creative arts, music, or dancing
- Receiving supports in your home
- Living in a certified residence or your own apartment or home

### Tips for parents and students

- Start early; it's never too early to investigate the possibilities.
- Ask questions; find out what options exist in your community and how to apply for them.
- Learn about the eligibility process for getting services. Find out what documents you need to provide so that supports are ready when needed.

### How can OPWDD help?

Our mission is to help people with developmental disabilities lead richer lives. We will help you live as independently as possible and be a part of your community. We value the abilities and talents you have to contribute, and your right to make choices about your life. We offer supports and resources that help you to:

- Enjoy meaningful relationships
- Experience personal health and growth
- Live in the home of your choice
- Fully participate in your communities

If you don't already get OPWDD services, you will need to go through our Front Door and eligibility processes.

### OPWDD's Front Door

OPWDD Front Door staff will talk with you about OPWDD services and the Front Door process, and will refer you to a Care Coordination Organization (CCO) where you will work with a care manager. The care manager will help you and your circle of support assess your interests and needs and put together a Life Plan (plan for services). Your Life Plan will describe your strengths and abilities and define your goals and support needs. Our services include supports to help you:

- Develop job skills and get a job in the community
- Develop and improve daily living skills
- Be more active in your community and
- Be more independent

## Employment and Meaningful Community Activities

OPWDD can help you explore employment and vocational services through Supported Employment (SEMP), the Employment Training Program (ETP), Site-Based Prevocational (SBPV) Services and Pathway to Employment (PTE). OPWDD can also assist with finding meaningful community activities through Day Habilitation (DH) and Community Habilitation (CH) Services.

**For more information, visit these pages on the OPWDD website:**

- **Supported Employment, Community Based Prevocational Services and Site-Based Prevocational: Services**  
<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/employment-training-and-supports>
- **Employment Training Program:**  
<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/employment-services>
- **Pathway to Employment:**  
<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/pathway-employment>
- **Day Habilitation and Community Habilitation:**  
<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/day-services>

### Or email:

[employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:employment.vocational.services@opwdd.ny.gov) or  
[day.community.services@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:day.community.services@opwdd.ny.gov)

## OPWDD School Transition Coordinators

For the phone number and email address of the OPWDD School Transition Coordinator in your area, contact the Regional Field Office nearest you by:

**calling** the OPWDD Infoline at 866-946-9733

**email:** [student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov)

## For more information about OPWDD's Front Door and supports and services in your area:

- visit <https://opwdd.ny.gov/get-started/front-door>
- call the OPWDD Infoline at 866-946-9733



## Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

Visit our website at [www.opwdd.ny.gov](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov) or contact OPWDD's information line at **(866) 946-9733**.

People with hearing impairments use NY Relay System **7-1-1**

## OPWDD Housing Supports

OPWDD provides supports for you to live at home or in a home in your community so you can be as independent as possible. Depending on your needs, you could choose:

- To live with your family in your family home with the right supports, such as respite and community habilitation.
- To live independently with assistance in your own apartment or house. You can also have a live-in caregiver. Housing subsidies are available to help you manage the costs of your home or apartment.
- To have a Paid Neighbor help you when you need help with certain tasks or dealing with problems. They are "on-call" to help you.
- Family Care, a service where you live with another family, participating in all the things that families do.

In some circumstances, depending upon your level of need, you may choose to live in a group home with other people with developmental disabilities. In this case, your family, others you choose, OPWDD staff and your care manager will help you find a group home that meets your needs.

### For more info, go to:

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/types-services/housing>