TEA Texas Education Agency | Texas SPED Support

Pathways

The Texas Transition & Employment Guide to a Successful Life After High School for Students with Disabilities



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Texas Transition & Employment Guide for Students with Disabilities



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Welcome to your future!

Moving from school into adult life requires thoughtful planning.

> *Where will you work? What will you want to continue learning after high school? Where will you live? Will you want support to meet your goals?*

You may have been thinking about this for a long time and already have some ideas about what you want for your life.

The Texas Transition and Employment Guide can help students with disabilities plan for adult life. You can begin planning while you are in school. Use this guide to find out what to expect and where to find help. You will see the term "family" used to describe the person or people in your life who support you. Family might be your mom, your dad, or another family member. Family can also mean a foster parent or someone else who makes legal decisions for you.

Look for the following icons throughout this guide to find helpful information for your planning:

My life, my voice
How to be more involved in your plan

Spotlight on supports
People in different roles to help you

Questions to ask your ARD committee
Note-taking guide for each topic

Taking Action
Activities to plan for your future

Making Connections
Agencies & contacts

Additional resources:

For families, supporters, or professionals:

Texas SPED Support
spedsupport.tea.texas.gov

Transition & Employment Guide Toolkit
sped.support/transition-and-employment-guide
Scan the QR code for quick access

SPEDTex
spedtex.org
Phone: 1-855-773-3839
Email: inquire@spedtex.org

Laws and requirements for schools:

The Texas Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process
framework.esc18.net

The Texas Education Agency (TEA)
tea.texas.gov

Talk with a special education administrator to find out about procedures in your district or charter school.

You will see the terms district, charter school, and school district in this guide. These all refer to your local school systems.

We need your feedback! Email your ideas for improving the Texas Transition & Employment Guide: sped@tea.texas.gov

Transition Planning

What is transition planning?

Schools help all students prepare for their future. If you have a disability and receive special education services, there is a process called transition planning included in your IEP by the time you reach age 14. This process can help you decide what you want for your future and figure out the steps you can take to meet your goals. Transition planning can help the important people in your life, such as your family and teachers, understand more about what you want for your life when you become an adult. You will have a chance to be part of this process every year until you graduate.

Why is transition planning important? What can you do to keep moving toward your goals while you are in public school? Where can you go for support? The following pages will help answer these questions.

See the next page for some terms to understand transition planning in your IEP.

What are some ideas you have about your life after graduation? What do you think will be fun? What do you think might be difficult?



Check out the overview video for this topic! sped.support/transition-jenny

Acronyms you will see in transition planning:

ARD	Admission, Review, and Dismissal
CTE	Career and Technical Education
FVE	Functional Vocational Evaluation
IEP	Individualized Education Program
PGP	Personal Graduation Plan
Pre-ETS	Pre-Employment Transition Services
SDMA	Supported Decision-Making Agreement
SOP	Summary of Performance
TED	Transition and Employment Services Designee
TVRC	Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
TWS-VRS	Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation

What to know about transition planning:

Student and Parent Involvement

You and your family should be involved in the transition planning process. If you decide not to (or are unable to) attend your ARD meeting, your ARD committee will find ways to include your shared information. See "***My Life, My Voice***" on page 6 to learn ways to be involved in your transition plan.

Transition Assessments

Transition assessments are tools to help you discover your strengths, preferences, interests, and needs. During a transition assessment, you may be asked about employment, education, and independent living as related to your adult life.

Postsecondary Goals

Postsecondary goals are statements that describe what you plan to do in adult life for:

- employment,
- education (e.g., college, training, certification programs, or other learning), and
- independent living (i.e., if you will want support in your home or community).

These goals are based on transition assessments. The sections for Careers, College, and Community in this Guide have more information about each of these areas.

Annual IEP Goals

Annual IEP goals are statements that describe the skills you will learn during school and use in adulthood. These goals are based on your current skills and what you can learn in one year. At least one of your IEP goals should support one or more of your postsecondary goals.

Transition Services

Transition services are activities to help you reach your postsecondary goals. These services include your **courses of study** and **coordinated set of activities**.

The **courses of study** list the classes you will take each year that can help you meet your postsecondary goals. These classes include what you must take to earn a diploma and classes you get to choose (electives).

Think of this as a four-to-six-year plan for high school. You might see your PGP used as the courses of study in your IEP. Find more about graduation planning on page 66.

The **coordinated set of activities** describes what needs to be done to make your postsecondary goals a reality. This to-do list will help you plan for the future and includes activities you can do during school (with your teachers) or outside of school (by yourself, with your family, or with someone from an agency). The coordinated set of activities (sometimes called "transition services" in the IEP) will include what needs to be done, who is responsible, and when each activity should be completed.

Your ARD committee will consider each area below to determine if activities are needed to make sure supports are in place when you graduate.

- Instruction
- Related service(s)
- Community experience
- Development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives
- If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation

Self-determination

Your ARD committee will consider if you need help developing decision-making skills or to increase your independence. You will receive information about SDMA and other alternatives to guardianship. For more information about SDMA, see "***My Rights***" starting on page 10.

Referral to Agencies

With permission from your parent or guardian, your ARD committee can invite agencies to your ARD meeting. If you are 18 or older, your ARD committee will need your permission.

Having an agency representative at your ARD meeting can help you connect with any support you will need after you graduate. Some agencies can even provide services during high school. See "***Making Connections***" throughout this guide and on page 68 to get an idea of some of the agencies available to support people with disabilities.

Transfer of Rights (information must be shared with you by age 17)

When you turn 18, all legal rights move from your family to YOU. Learning about this transfer of rights helps you plan for making decisions in adulthood, including ARD committee decisions. See "***My Rights***" starting on page 10.

How did transition planning help me? One student's story:



Hi, I'm Kendra. I graduated from high school three years ago, and today I work in cybersecurity for a bank. I live in an apartment with two roommates.

I have a learning disability that makes it hard for me to understand what I read. I can read all the words, but it's hard for me to remember them and make sense of what they mean. I had audiobooks, tech tools to make notes, and graphic organizers to remember important information in high school. My disability doesn't get in my way at home. I use tech tools to help me write reports or read manuals for my job.

Transition planning was so helpful. Since elementary school, I went to my ARD meetings. In middle school, they started talking about what I wanted to do when I graduated. It seemed like a long way off, but it got here fast! My ARD committee told me how I could take high school classes to help me reach my goals. It was the first time I thought about using school to help me get what I wanted. During my senior year, I took a class that helped me get my first certification for cybersecurity. Before I even left high school, I was on the road to a career.

One of my best teachers would go through my IEP with me to find all the things I was supposed to do on my own or with my family as part of transition planning. He told me about the differences between high school and having a job or going to college. He helped me find ways to talk about my disability with employers. I practiced by telling my other teachers about the accommodations I needed in their classes. He helped me think about questions to ask when I met with people from agencies who could provide support after graduation. It was scary at first, but it helped to have support. If anything happens with my job, I know where to go and what to ask.

If you're starting the transition planning process, it might seem like there's a lot to do and a lot to think about. Take a deep breath and remember that it's YOUR life they're talking about. Stay involved, talk with your family and trusted teachers, and remember to take it one step at a time.

My life, my voice: Self-determination in transition planning

What feels right to you today? What would you like to be able to do next?

Preparing for your ARD meeting

- ☐ Participate in transition assessments to share what you like and don't like.
- ☐ Talk about your skills and strengths.
- ☐ Ask who will be attending your ARD meeting and what will be discussed.
- ☐ Invite someone to come with you to the meeting to be your support.
- ☐ If you cannot attend your ARD meeting, ask someone who will be there to share your thoughts with your ARD committee.

During your ARD meeting

- ☐ Introduce the people at your ARD meeting.
- ☐ Review some of the information in your IEP.
- ☐ Share what is going well in your classes and what supports work best for you.
- ☐ Ask questions if you don't understand what someone just said.

After your ARD meeting

- ☐ Request a copy of your IEP from the school.
- ☐ Review the transition services (or coordinated set of activities) to see what you can do now to get services when you leave public school.
- ☐ Talk to your teachers about the supports that work for you to be successful in your classes.
- ☐ Talk with your family, friends, or supporters about how your ARD meeting went. Let them know if you have any questions about what happened during your ARD meeting or what to do next.

Spotlight on supports: Meet the TED!

Did you know there's someone in your school district who is responsible for connecting students and their families with resources for transition planning? This person is called the Transition and Employment Services Designee, or TED. Most TEDs have other roles, so your TED may also be the special education director, a counselor, or a teacher.

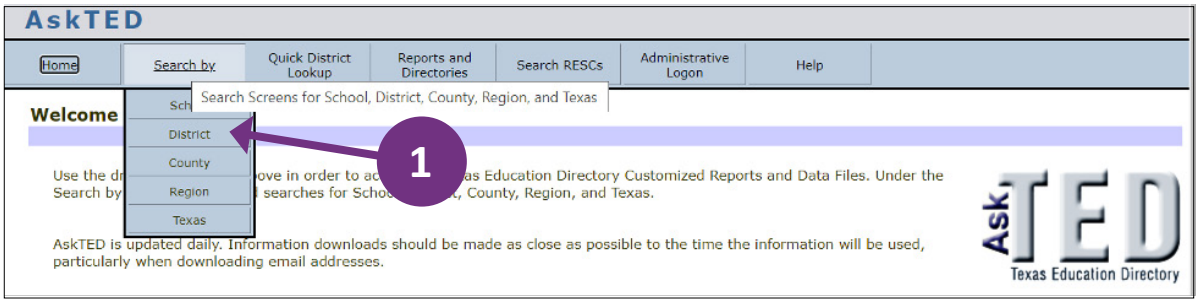
If you have questions about your transition plan or want help finding resources, contact the TED in your school district.

See the following page for steps to find the TED for your district or charter school by using AskTED, the Texas Education Directory.

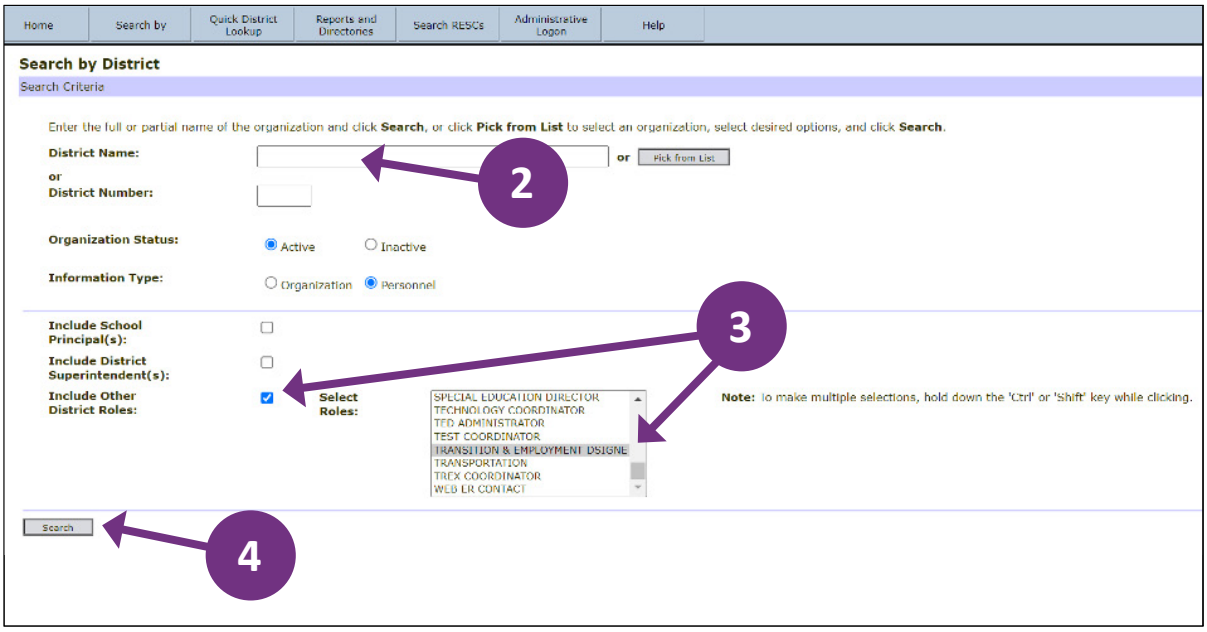
How to find the TED in AskTED

To find the TED for your district or charter school, go to the AskTED website and follow these steps:

1. Click on **Search By** and then choose **District**



2. Type the name of the district or charter school
3. Select "**Personnel**" + "**Include Other District Roles**" and scroll to select "**TRANSITION & EMPLOYMENT DSIGNE**"
4. Click **Search**



AskTED: Texas Education Directory
https://tealprod.tea.state.tx.us/tea.askted.web/Forms/Home.aspx
Scan the QR code for quick access

*What if you want to know more about your transition plan? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

Where can I find transition planning in my IEP?

What supports do I receive now that I will need when I'm an adult?

What can I do now to make sure I have supports after I graduate? Who can help me complete these activities?

What skills can I learn this year that will help me meet my goals after high school?

What classes can I take that will help me meet my goals after high school?

Can I continue to receive special education services after I finish my high school classes and assessments?

Use this space to write other questions you have about transition planning in your IEP.

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your transition planning.

Resources for transition planning

National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes
Find information, contacts, and strategies to improve continuing education for deaf people.
nationaldeafcenter.org/resources/transition/

Navigate Life Texas
Explore resources that empower parents of children with disabilities or special health care needs.
navigatelifetexas.org/en/transition-to-adulthood

Partners Resource Network
Explore training and information for parents.
409-898-4684 | 1-800-866-4726 (Toll Free) | prntexas.org
partnersresource@sbcglobal.net

Special Needs Parent Toolkit for Military Families
Use the comprehensive information and tools to assist military families with children with disabilities in navigating the systems for medical and special education services, community support, benefits, and entitlements.
militaryonesource.mil/products/special-needs-parent-toolkit-downloadable-146

Texas Parent to Parent
Explore resources that empower families to be strong advocates through parent-to-parent support, resource referral, and education.
txp2p.org

Texas Project First
Find information for parents of students with disabilities.
texasprojectfirst.org

Transitional Living Services programs (available through DFPS)
Receive supports for youth in foster care or who have aged out, including an integrated approach to transition planning and transitional services.
dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living

- Find the **TED** for your district or charter school. See page 7 for how to find your TED.
- Contact the **transition specialist at your education service center (ESC)**. There are 20 ESCs across Texas. You can find your contact on the Texas SPED Support website (sped.support/transition-specialist-at-esc).
- Reach out to the **McKinney-Vento representative** in your LEA for support if you are a student experiencing homelessness (tehcy.tea.texas.gov/liaison-directory).

My Rights



When you are a child, your guardian makes all legal decisions for you. Your guardian is usually your parent, but may also be another family member, foster parent, or someone else. When you turn 18 in Texas, you are officially an "adult." That means you have legal rights and responsibilities starting on your 18th birthday. You might hear the terms "age of majority" or "transfer of rights" to describe the legal changes that happen when you turn 18.

What are some examples of rights for adults?

- Voting in elections
- Getting married
- Choosing who can see your personal information

What are some examples of responsibilities for adults?

- Following the law
- Respecting the rights of others
- Asking for help
- Signing legal documents and paperwork

It is important to know your rights and responsibilities. If you have a disability, it is important to know if you will need support to understand your rights or make decisions about your life.

Will you want support to understand your options, make decisions, or communicate your decisions about any of the following?

- ☐ Medical care
- ☐ Taking classes
- ☐ Getting a job
- ☐ Finding a place to live and maintaining your home
- ☐ Spending and saving money
- ☐ Voting in an election
- ☐ Relationships and friendships
- ☐ Other areas: _____
- ☐ I will be able to make all decisions on my own



Check out the overview video for this topic! sped.support/transition-jenny

Some ways people can get support with decision-making in adulthood are:

Asking trusted friends or family
This is an informal conversation and does not require any documentation.

Signing a Supported Decision-Making Agreement (SDMA)
You assign a "supporter" to review your options with you.

Signing a Power of Attorney
This is a legal document that allows someone to make decisions for you.

Having a Representative Payee to manage Social Security benefits
This is someone who manages your money if you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

Meeting with a legal advisor
You can talk to an attorney or professional advocate about your legal rights.

Being assigned a guardian
A judge decides that you are not able to make your own decisions and assigns someone to make decisions for you.

What will the school do to help me understand my rights and responsibilities?

At least one year before you turn 18:

Your school will provide information and resources called a Notice of Transfer of Rights about
- guardianship,
- alternatives to guardianship, including SDMA, and
- other supports to allow you to live independently as an adult.

Your individualized education program (IEP) will include a statement that your school has shared this information with you.

When you turn 18:

All legal rights and responsibilities are now yours. You can decide if you want support to make decisions. Your family will receive notice of your admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) meetings. This is not the same as an invitation.

To share information about you with your family, your school will follow the district policy.

The notice that rights have transferred will be sent to you and your family. It will include information about guardianship and alternatives.



How did planning for the transfer of rights help me? One student's story:



Hello, my name is Daniel, and I'm 20 years old. When I was in high school, I was a little bit nervous about being an adult. I worried I might make a bad decision or do something wrong and get into trouble with the police.

My teachers helped me understand what it means to be an adult. They told me about the kinds of decisions adults need to make and that I can choose someone to help me. I learned about guardianship, but I didn't want to have all my rights taken away. One of my friends has a guardian, and it works for her, but I didn't want that for myself.

I asked my brother to be my supporter for things like money, health, and school. We signed a piece of paper that says he can get information from places like my bank, doctor's office, or school to help me make decisions. My teachers told me that I still get to decide for myself, even though he is my supporter. It's not like he's my boss or anything.

My brother comes to my ARD meetings and helps me understand what my choices are. He helped me talk about what calms me down when I'm frustrated. He also helped me understand that I will not be able to go to my 18+ program after I turn 22. We talked with my ARD committee about what I want my life to look like when I leave school.

My teachers helped me learn ways to be independent and to tell people what is important to me. We practice doing things like making a doctor's appointment or calling in sick to work.

Everyone needs help with different things. I might need help to do some things, but that doesn't mean I can't make my own decisions. I'm not scared of being an adult now that I have support.

My life, my voice: Self-determination in legal planning

What skills do you already have? What would you like to be able to do next?

Before turning 18

- ☐ Learn and practice skills for:
  - ☐ Making choices,
  - ☐ Solving problems,
  - ☐ Setting goals,
  - ☐ Talking about what you like and don't like,
  - ☐ Talking about your strengths and abilities,
  - ☐ Telling people when you can do something on your own and when you want help, and
  - ☐ Describing your disability and what kinds of support works best for you.
- ☐ Work with your family and your teachers to find ways to increase independence.
- ☐ Attend your ARD meetings and contribute to the discussion. Your parents (or legal guardians) hold the right to make final decisions about your education.
- ☐ Learn about rights and responsibilities in school and at home.

Once you turn 18

- ☐ Use and improve your self-determination skills.
- ☐ Practice sharing information about your disability with teachers or agencies.
- ☐ Find more ways to be as independent as possible in school or in the community.
- ☐ Talk to a trusted friend or family member for support in making legal decisions.
- ☐ Attend your ARD meeting and make decisions about what you want to do.
- ☐ Check to be sure you understand the changes to your rights and responsibilities.

Spotlight on supports: Meet a Supporter

In Texas, an adult with a disability is allowed to choose a "supporter" if they are able to understand that they need assistance and can select who they want to support them. Choosing a supporter does not take away the person's rights. The supporter helps the person with a disability understand their options and communicate their decisions. The supporter can be a parent, sibling, family member, friend, co-worker, or anyone trusted by the person with a disability.

The Supported Decision-Making Agreement (SDMA):

- » Is a written plan for what decisions the person with a disability wants help making and who they want help from,
- » Can be signed with two witnesses or taken to a notary, and
- » Can be ended at any time if the adult decides they no longer want support from that person or if the supporter is abusing, neglecting, or exploiting the adult with a disability.

One supporter might help by going to the doctor with the person. They listen to what the doctor says and talk with the person about their medical choices. Another supporter might go to the ARD meeting to help the person understand their choices and talk to their ARD committee about what they want from school. Some supporters help in many areas. The SDMA can be just what the person with a disability needs to stay independent.

*What if you want to know more about your legal rights? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

What are some ways that students in my school can learn skills for self-determination, like setting goals or making decisions?

Will I need any special support, like an IEP goal or a specialized curriculum, to work on skills for self-determination?

Who can help me learn how to describe my disability?

What can the school do to help me understand what changes when I turn 18?

Are there other resources to understand what changes when someone is 18?

Who can I talk to if I have questions about my rights and responsibilities in adulthood?

Use this space to write other questions you you have about the transfer of rights.

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your planning for the transfer of rights.

Resources for legal rights and responsibilities

411 on Disability Disclosure from The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth)
Make informed decisions about whether or not to disclose your disability and consider how that decision may impact your education, employment, and social life.
877-871-0744 (Toll Free) | TTY: 877-871-0665 (Toll Free)
thinkcollege.net/sites/default/files/files/resources/411_Disability_Disclosure_complete.pdf

Disability Rights Texas (DRTX)
Explore resources to understand and exercise your rights under the law for full and equal participation in society.
Statewide Intake Line for New Clients: 1-800-252-9108
Online Intake Available 24/7 at: disabilityrightstx.org/en/getting-help/intake-process
Headquarters: 512-454-4816 | DRTX.org

Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities
Learn about efforts to work toward a state in which people with disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination.
gov.texas.gov/organization/disabilities

I'm Determined
Discover resources to learn about self-determination and find tools to be more independent.
imdetermined.org/youth

Legal Hotline for Texans
Find free and reliable legal information for low-income Texans.
texaslawhelp.org

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies
Learn skills for self-determination and track your progress.
spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/resource-library/next-steps-independence-skills-and-strategies

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
Learn about protections from discrimination in the provision of benefits and services through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
800-368-1019 | TDD: 800-537-7697 (Toll Free)
hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/disability/index.html | OCRMail@hhs.gov

Selective Service
Find information about who must register under the Military Selective Service Act.
888-655-1825 (Toll Free) | sss.gov/register/who-needs-to-register/#p4

Resources for legal rights and responsibilities continued

Special Needs Alliance
Find lists of attorneys for special needs planning.
specialneedsalliance.org

Texas Advocates
Explore self-advocacy support for Texans.
texadvocates.org

The Arc of Texas
Find information and resources for the human rights and self-determination of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
thearcoftexas.org | info@thearcoftexas.org | 512-454-6694

For questions about rights and responsibilities for students in your school, talk to a **campus administrator** (like a principal or a school counselor).

For questions about your rights as a student receiving special education services, talk to the **special education director** for your district or charter school.

Careers



Finding your way to successful employment is an important part of the transition to adulthood. There are steps you can take to connect with a career that matches your interests and your strengths.

First, think about what a "career" can look like.

- Full-time or part-time
- May require postsecondary education such as a degree or certification (see "***College***" on page 23)
- Internships/apprenticeships, or on-the-job training
- Work for a large organization with many employees, a small organization with few employees, or self-employed
- Salary, hourly pay, or volunteering to help in your community

Next, think about any **support** you might need for successful employment.

- Services to write a resume, find a job, or get through the interview and hiring process
- Accommodations, such as wheelchair ramps, accessible documents, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, or writing software
- Job coaching for as long as it takes to learn a new job or task or for as long as you are in the job
- Customized employment: Providing a specific service for an employer based on your strengths, without completing all the tasks for that role

Did You Know?

People with disabilities have many options to earn a paycheck without losing important benefits such as Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). See the "***Financial***" topic starting on page 48 for more information about work incentive programs.

Employment First!

Texas is an **Employment First** state. That means it's a state priority to ensure every adult who wants to work can have a job where they earn a living wage and are included in the community. Many community-based service providers offer supports for people who need assistance for employment due to their disability. There are two types of support you can find in the Medicaid waiver programs.

Employment Assistance (EA) helps a person locate competitive employment in the community.

Supported Employment (SE) is provided by the long-term services and supports (LTSS) program or provider to help a person be self-employed, work from home, or perform in a competitive, integrated work setting. It can also help a person keep their job in competitive, integrated employment. Supported employment might be needed for a short time or for the whole time a person is in that job.



Check out the overview video for this topic! sped.support/transition-jose

You can work toward your employment goals while you are still in school. Talk with your teachers or school counselor to find out about the following.

- Graduation options, including endorsements that match your employment goals (see page 66).
- Career and technical education (CTE) classes and programs of study offered on your high school campus.
- Other courses that can help you prepare for employment.
- Career assessments to discover your interests and strengths and to identify the supports you will need for success on the job.
- Agencies that can provide supports you might need in the workplace.
- Functional vocational evaluation (FVE) that measures student performance on actual job tasks or vocational activities in the natural setting where the activity occurs. Your admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee will decide if an FVE is appropriate for you. Many students receiving special education services do not need an FVE because career and other transition assessments are enough to develop postsecondary goals and services for employment.

Services are available from Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS). This agency helps Texans with disabilities prepare for employment, find a job, and advance their careers. You might hear people refer to this agency as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Voc Rehab, Texas Workforce, and even the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

VR counselors work with students to prepare for postsecondary education and employment opportunities. You might be eligible for services through TWS-VRS.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available for eligible and "potentially eligible" students with disabilities ages 14–22. Pre-ETS include:

- Job exploration counseling,
- Work-based learning experiences,
- Counseling on opportunities for postsecondary educational programs,
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, and
- Instruction in self-advocacy.

Other VR services are available to students and adults, as eligible.

- Vocational counseling and guidance
- Referrals for hearing, vision, and other examinations
- Assistance with medical appointments and treatment
- Rehabilitation devices, including hearing aids, wheelchairs, artificial limbs, and braces
- Therapy to address a disability, including occupational or speech therapy and applied behavioral analysis
- Physical restoration services
- Supported employment
- Medical, psychological, and vocational assessments
- Assistance with college education or trade certification
- On-the-job training
- Training in workplace and employer expectations
- Vocational adjustment training
- Rehabilitation Teachers Services to help you learn braille, orientation and mobility, and home and health management skills if you are blind or have a visual impairment

As part of transition planning, your ARD committee will talk about agencies such as TWS-VRS that can help you meet your postsecondary goals. See "***Spotlight on Supports***" on page 20 to find out more about connecting with VR at your campus.

How did planning for a career help me? One student's story:

I'm Calvin and I'm a park ranger for a state park. I'm 25 years old.



I have a speech impairment that makes it hard for me to say certain words. Sometimes I get so stuck that I have to stop talking for a minute. I also deal with depression and anxiety. Sometimes I'm so tired and stressed that it can be hard to do my job or manage my life. I take medication and see a therapist to manage my mental health.

I had a tough time in high school. I even wanted to drop out. My ARD committee helped me focus on transition planning to think about my future when choosing classes. Some of the classes I took were just to get a diploma, and some classes helped me learn skills for the kind of work I wanted to do. Seeing those classes on my schedule helped me focus on my long-term goals. It wasn't always easy, but I'm glad I finished high school.

When I was in high school, I had a Voc Rehab counselor who told my parents I would never be able to keep a job because of my disability. That made me so mad! I didn't want to talk to anyone from VR ever again. My family and I found someone at VR we could talk to about our experience. That's how I met Andy, another VR counselor. He helped me explore all the possibilities and options. VR provided psychological assessments to help me see my strengths and counseling to manage my mental health. Andy found me a summer work experience program that boosted my confidence.

I also liked working for my aunt's landscaping company. I like being outside all day, and I enjoy helping people. I talked to my school counselor about it, and she said I should take Career Preparation to earn credit for working at the landscaping company. During that class, I researched careers where I can work outside and get paid a good salary. Being a park ranger sounded very cool. I earned an endorsement in business and industry with a program of study in Plant Science. After high school, I got a bachelor's degree in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences. Every day I get to be outside and help people.

When I was in college, VR helped with tuition and paid for books and supplies for my classes. They closed my case when I got my job as a park ranger, but Andy told me that I could apply for more services if I needed support to advance in my career.

My life, my voice: Self-determination in career planning

What skills do you already have? What would you like to be able to do next?

- ☐ Dream big! Don't let any disability limit your imagination.
- ☐ Participate in transition assessments for employment. Be honest about what you like and don't like.
- ☐ Discover what you do well and learn how to describe your strengths.
- ☐ Learn ways to describe your disability and what kinds of support work best for you to succeed in a job.
- ☐ Talk with trusted teachers and family about sharing disability information in the workplace.
- ☐ Choose some classes that will help you learn about careers or learn skills for the job you want.

If you are struggling to think of work you want to do in adulthood:

— Make a list of all the things you enjoy doing,
— Find out which jobs include some of those activities, and
— Talk with someone you trust about why it's hard for you to think about a career.

Spotlight on supports: Meet the TVRC

Did you know there is a ***Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor*** (TVRC) assigned to your campus? That's right! A qualified VR counselor is assigned to every public school in Texas. The TVRC is employed by TWS-VRS, not by the school. Most TVRCs support many schools in multiple districts. Ask the TED for your district if you would like to schedule a meeting with the TVRC for your campus.

Your TVRC can:

» Attend ARD meetings and other meetings to plan for your transition to adulthood, such as person-centered planning,
» Provide information about VR services and eligibility, including Pre-ETS,
» Refer students to other agencies that provide support for employment,
» Develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for eligible students,
» Connect students with summer work experience programs, workshops, seminars, and other employment transition services, and
» Provide additional services to support a successful transition to employment for students with disabilities.

See the next page for questions to ask your TVRC.

*What if you want to know more about your career plan? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

Where can I find information about planning for a career in my individualized education plan (IEP)?

Which graduation option is best for meeting my employment goal?

What classes are available on my campus that can help me prepare for a career? Are there any required prerequisite classes? Will I need any support in my classes?

What happens if I change my mind about the career I want?

Will I need support for my disability to be successful in my career?

What else can I do now to prepare for employment in adult life?

Are there agencies I should contact about employment services?

Who can I talk to if I have questions about planning for employment?

Questions to ask your TVRC

Am I eligible for Pre-ETS? What does "potentially eligible" mean for me?

What Pre-ETS would be helpful for me?

How is eligibility determined to receive VR services (now or as an adult)?

What is the application process to receive adult services through VR? When should I apply?

Will earning a paycheck affect any services I receive, such as SSI?

Who can I contact if I have more questions?

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your career planning.

Resources for careers

Answering the Big Question: If I Go to Work, Will I Lose My Medicaid or Medicare?
Find employment resources for individuals with developmental disabilities.
tcdd.texas.gov/resources/employment

Career One Stop
Use tools to help job seekers, students, businesses, and career professionals.
1-877-US2-JOBS | 1-877-872-5627 | TTY: 1-877-889-5627
careeronestop.org | info@careeronestop.org

Employment Guides for People with Disabilities from Health and Human Services (HHS)
Receive guidance to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.
hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/employment/employment-first/employment-guide-people-disabilities

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
Explore resources for workplace accommodations and disability employment issues.
askjan.org

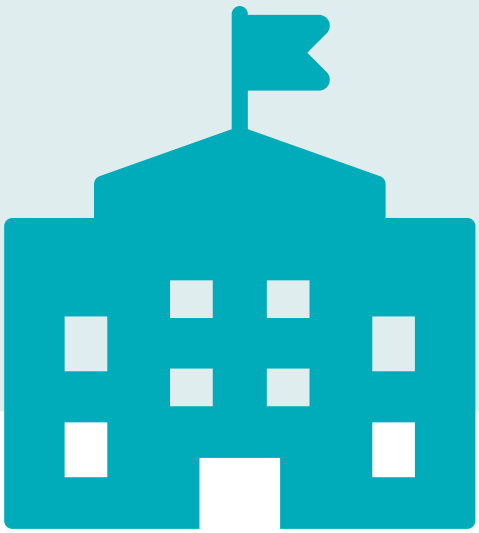
SSA Ticket to Work
Find career development support for Social Security disability beneficiaries age 18 through 64 who want to work.
1-866-968-7842 | TTY: 1-866-833-2967 | ssa.gov/work

Texas Workforce Solutions Rapid Engagement Team
Connect with the TWS Rapid Engagement Team to find resources and VR offices in your area.
512-936-6400 | webp.twc.state.tx.us/services/VRLookup
vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov

Find the **TVRC** assigned to your campus. You can learn more about this role on page 20.

Ask your **school counselor or CTE teachers** on your campus about work-based learning opportunities available during high school.

College



Learning doesn't stop when you graduate. Most people need more than a high school diploma to reach their career goals. You have many options for learning in adulthood. You might hear these options called "higher education" or "postsecondary education."

First, think about the options to consider.

College or university

Earn a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree.

- Admissions requirements to earn these degrees
- Usually takes at least four years to complete the program for a bachelor's degree

Community college

Earn an associate degree or certification.

- Open enrollment, possibly with placement tests to see which classes you need to take
- Usually takes one or two years to complete a program

Career college

Get hands-on learning to build skills for a specific career.

- Also called vocational, technical, or trade school

Online learning

Classes that may count toward a degree are taken online.

- Access courses through the computer to learn skills or earn certifications

Postsecondary programs and services for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Earn a certification or take college classes without earning a degree.

- Available at some colleges and universities
- Open enrollment, typically no entrance exams
- Inclusive opportunities, structure, and duration vary across programs



Check out the overview video for this topic! sped.support/transition-cady

Community/informal classes

Learn skills for fun and connect with others who share your interests.

- Open enrollment, no entrance exams
- Classes can be offered as briefly as one day or can meet regularly

On-the-job training

Learn new skills through training offered by your workplace.

- Optional or required
- Can last from one hour to several days

Other learning

What do you want to know more about or be able to do? Who already has those skills and can teach you? Can you find an apprenticeship to learn from someone already working in the field you are interested in?

Next, think about supports that work best for you in the classes you are taking now.

- *Accommodations*. These adaptations change how the teacher presents information or how you show what you know. You meet the same standard as peers your age. Some accommodations are large print, a quiet place to relax when anxious, or sitting where you learn best (like close to the teacher).

- *Modifications*. These adaptations change what you are expected to learn. You study the same things as peers your age, but you are not expected to meet the same standard. One example of a modification is watching the movie version of a book instead of reading it. Another modification might be spelling assistance on a spelling assignment.

Some of the supports listed above might not be available in the program you want to pursue. See the questions on page 27 to plan for conversations about support options in the program. Take a moment to think about what type of learning you want for yourself in the future. Who can help you think about your learning goals? Who do you feel comfortable sharing information about your disability?



How did planning for college help me? One student's story:



Hello, I'm Phuong, and I graduated from college with a Bachelor's degree in Nutrition Sciences. I'm a public health nutritionist for a hospital.

I was able to get the proper support in college because I started planning in high school. I thought because I have a visual impairment that I would have an individualized education program (IEP) forever. In college, there was something called the Student Supports Office. I had to give them proof of my disability to get the accommodations I needed. I thought my white cane would be enough proof! They needed an evaluation from a professional. I used the evaluation from my special education team in high school, but I knew some people who went to places like Voc Rehab to get their evaluation.

Before I started applying to colleges, I had to think about the differences between high school and higher education. When I took tests in high school, my teachers used the accommodations in my IEP. When I took a college entrance exam, my high school counselor applied for me to take the test in braille and to have extended time. I had to sign a consent form so he could share my information with the testing company.

When I applied to college, I had to decide what to tell them about my disability. Telling my story can be a private thing for me, so I told them that I have a visual impairment in my application, but I didn't tell them what happened or exactly how it affected me. I saved some of that for the Student Supports Office, and some of it I never shared with anyone except my closest friends. My high school counselor helped me plan what to say about my disability, and the Accessibility Specialist in my college helped me plan how to talk to professors about my needs.

I met some students on my campus who never told the Student Supports Office about their disabilities. I think they felt okay talking to me about their disability because I have one too, but they didn't want to talk about it with anyone else. They were able to keep their story private because they didn't have disabilities that you can see. They didn't get the support they needed, and college may have been more difficult for them because of that.

I did well in most of my classes, but I had a hard time with my chemistry class. The professor wasn't providing the accommodations I needed. I talked to my Accessibility Specialist, and she helped me plan for talking to my professor about my right to accommodations. I'm glad I practiced talking about my disability and my needs during high school, because it was easier to advocate for myself in college.

College was fun. I made a lot of friends and learned a lot. I joined a student group that helped me feel comfortable with who I am. The skills I learned in high school helped me get the independence I needed to navigate college. Even though it was hard sometimes, I don't regret a single minute of my college experience!

My life, my voice: Self-determination in postsecondary education

- ☐ Learn how to describe your disability and strengths.
- ☐ Explain the support you receive in your classes: what works for you to learn, complete assignments, or take tests.
- ☐ Connect with a mentor who can talk about his or her experience going to college with a disability.
- ☐ Choose classes that will be needed to meet admission requirements in the college or program you want to attend.
- ☐ Participate in extracurricular activities that you find interesting, enjoyable, or rewarding. Take risks by joining different clubs or volunteering in the community.
- ☐ Set goals for your learning, such as completing a project before it is due, then list the steps to meet the goal, such as doing part of the project each day.
- ☐ Manage your schedule. Know when you need to be at school, in class, or in activities. Plan for how long it will take you to organize yourself and arrive on time.
- ☐ Ask your teacher to explain assignments if you are not sure what to do.
- ☐ Ask your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor about support options through VR, including tuition reimbursements.

What skills do you already have? What would you like to be able to do next?

If you are struggling to think about what you want to learn after high school:

— You're in good company! Many students wonder what is possible for them after high school.
— Reflect on what you find interesting and like learning about. Participate in transition assessments to discover your strengths.
— Talk to a trusted teacher or family member about your concerns for postsecondary education.

Spotlight on supports: Meet the Disability Services Office

You won't have an IEP in college!

Special education services are only available in public schools. Postsecondary schools do not have to provide the same services available for high school students. If you decide to go to college, you will need to request any needed accommodations. You will be protected against discrimination, and you can expect things like wheelchair ramps, but there will be different processes to support students with disabilities.

Find the office for disability services at the school you want to attend. This office might be called something like "learning support" or "accessibility services." If you have trouble finding the right office, ask an advisor or recruiter for the school to find the people who can help you get accommodations and other support.

You will need documentation of your disability. There are several documents that may be helpful to describe your disability. Look for the summary of performance (SOP) or the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) in your most recent IEP, or request a copy of your full and individual evaluation (FIE) from your high school. Your college will let you know what documentation is required to receive supports.

*What if you want to know more about your postsecondary education? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

Where can I find information in my IEP about planning for postsecondary education?

What are my strengths for learning?

Which graduation option is best for meeting my learning goals?

What accommodations or modifications have helped me be successful in my classes?

Who can I talk to if I have more questions about planning for higher education?

Questions to ask the college and career counselor at your high school

What is the typical timeline for applying to colleges?

What is the timeline to apply for accommodations on the entrance exam (SAT, ACT, other)?

How much does it cost to go to college?

What information will I need to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)?

Are there any scholarships you recommend for me?

Do you know any students who graduated from this school who could talk to me about going to college?

Questions to ask the disability services office at a higher education institution

What are the admission requirements for this school/program?

Is there an entrance exam?

How much will it cost to complete this program?

What support is available for students with disabilities?

What documentation will I need to get services?

Are there students with disabilities similar to mine who would be willing to talk with me about their experiences at this school?

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support college planning.

Resources for college

Apply Texas
Apply to any Texas public university and many Texas community colleges and private universities with a single application.
applytexas.org

Federal Student Aid
Research financial aid to help pay for college or career school.
studentaid.gov
Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC): 1-800-433-3243

My Texas Future
Find tools, resources, and advisor support, whether you want to go back to school or advance in your career.
mytexasfuture.org/adult-college

Texas GEAR UP
Explore resources to help you be successful in college and watch videos of kids who have overcome some of the same challenges you may be facing.
txcte.org/resource/gearup-resources#paragraph-29643

Texas OnCourse
Unlock your potential and plan your future with college and career preparation resources.
texasoncourse.org

Think College
Find inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disabilities.
thinkcollege.net

Explore Texas resources for college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities:

- Postsecondary Programs and Services for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (apps.highered.texas.gov/idd)
- Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) Higher Education Resource Guide and directory. (tcdd.texas.gov/resources/higher-education-resources)

Community



Having the skills and support to direct your own life at home and in the community is often called ***independent living***. Transition planning includes considering whether you will need support to access your community fully.

Think about yourself at home or school. Which of the following activities do you want support to manage?

- ☐ Cooking meals or shopping for groceries
- ☐ Cleaning the house
- ☐ Showering, getting dressed, or taking care of health needs
- ☐ Getting from home to work, stores, friends' houses (transportation)
- ☐ Planning fun things to do with friends
- ☐ Getting help in an emergency
- ☐ Staying safe at home or in the community
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I can take care of these things on my own.

People with disabilities can live as full community members, even if they need support to take care of independent living tasks. Here are some examples of independent living supports.

- » Personal care attendant (PCA) who comes to your home to help with things like getting dressed, cooking, or doing laundry
- » Special transportation to allow you to access your community without having a driver's license or a car of your own
- » Therapies to help you learn ways to do things in your home or community without the support from other people
- » Assistive technology to help you do things like speak, type emails, find help in an emergency, or use a computer
- » Modifications to your home such as wheelchair ramps, lower countertops, or alarms and doorbells that use lights/vibration instead of sound



As you set goals for your adult life, think about any support that can help you maintain your independence. See the "***Financial***" topic on page 48 to learn about support to live independently.

How did planning for independent living help me? One student's story:



My name is Wyatt, and I'm 24 years old. I live in an apartment with my roommates. We each have our own bedroom, and we share the kitchen and living room. We live near some pretty good restaurants, so we go out to eat when we can afford it.

I'm deaf, so I use things like a vibrating alarm clock and video relay service for my phone. I also have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), so I need systems to keep everything organized, or I'll lose track of bills and stuff.

It was easy to know what to do in high school, but when you graduate, you have to put your own life together. I was lucky that I got to do transition planning with my admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. I grew up in foster care and I wanted all the support I could get. Some of the other kids I knew from foster care didn't have an ARD committee to help them plan for being an adult.

My teachers invited agencies to my ARD meetings that could pay for the technology I needed. The people from the agencies didn't always show up to the meeting, so we made a plan for how I could connect with them. Sometimes my teachers would help me call agencies during school. It helped to plan what to say and have someone to help me think of questions. After practicing like that, I was able to make calls on my own. All I needed was the phone number.

The foster care system helped me with transition planning, too. I had a Circles of Support meeting where we talked about my goals and who could help me get everything together to meet my goals. It reminded me of the meetings in school where we talked about transition planning. I wish my school and my Child Protective Services (CPS) worker had spoken to each other more. Sometimes I felt like a ping pong ball bouncing between these systems.

My special education teacher met with me to plan for all the things I would need to do as an adult. I learned about paying bills, doing laundry, and stuff like that when I did the Preparation for Adult Living program with foster care. I was surprised when my special education teacher asked about friends. The only friends I had were people I knew in school. When I thought about who I hung out with outside of school, it was pretty much my foster family. We made a plan to help me figure out how to have friendships outside of school.

There were some other surprises, like signing up for Selective Service. I figured the military would automatically know I had a disability, but it turns out all men need to register on their 18th birthday. It's not like joining the military. It's just letting them know you are old enough to join, not that you qualify to join.

Getting ready to be an adult can be fun. You have more of a say in how you want to live. It can also take work to make sure you get the right help. My advice is to stay on top of things. If an agency doesn't call you back, remember it's just humans over there, like you and me. Sometimes they get busy. Keep calling or try other numbers until you find someone who can help. Tell people you trust what's important to you and keep moving toward your goals.

My life, my voice: Self-determination for independent living

- [ ] Set goals for yourself, such as planning an activity with friends.
- [ ] Make choices about how you want to spend your time at home.
- [ ] Discover what you do well.
- [ ] Learn how to describe your strengths.
- [ ] Learn ways to describe your disability and what kinds of support work best for you to be as independent as possible.
- [ ] Talk with trusted teachers and family about sharing disability information with some of the people in your life.

What skills do you already have? What would you like to be able to do next?

Spotlight on supports: Meet the Center for Independent Living

Did you know that there are places across Texas that help people with disabilities achieve their independent living goals? In Texas, there are 27 Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Your local CIL can provide services such as:

- **Information and referral** – help to find the information and resources you need to achieve your goals.
- **Independent Living (IL) skills training** – receive training in specific everyday skills essential to living independently, such as meal preparation.
- **Counseling** – get a better understanding of your disability and help to set and reach your goals.
- **Advocacy** – receive training in self-advocacy skills and assistance advocating for accommodations, equal access, and other rights.
- **Transition services** – receive help moving from nursing homes and other institutions to home and community-based residences or help to transition from high school to employment and postsecondary education opportunities.

Contact the nearest CIL to learn if you are eligible to receive these services. Contact 2-1-1 to find your CIL.

*What if you want to know more about your plan for independent living? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

Will I need support to live independently in my home or community when I am an adult?
(If you will not need support, skip this section)

What kind of support do you recommend?

What are my strengths for independent living?

Where can I find information about independent living in my individualized education program (IEP)?

Are there classes I can take to learn more skills for independent living?

Are there agencies I should contact about independent living services for adults?

Who can I talk to if I have more questions about planning for independent living?

Questions to ask your local CIL

What types of services do you offer?

Am I eligible for any of these services?

Are there other agencies in the area you would recommend for me to contact about services?

Use this space to write other questions you have about living as independently as possible.

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your independent living in the community.

Resources for community

Aging and Disability Resource Center (available through Health and Human Services)
Talk to a trained professional who will guide you to the right service options to help meet your needs.
855-YES-ADRC (855-937-2372)
hhs.texas.gov/services/aging/long-term-care/aging-disability-resource-centers

Easterseals
Find home and community-based services and supports that are categorized into five distinct areas: Live, Learn, Work, Play, and Act. These services are provided through a network of local Easterseals facilities in communities nationwide.
800-221-6827 (Toll Free) | easterseals.com/connect-locally

Independent Living Services
Explore the services available through Centers for Independent Living (CILs).
hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/independent-living-services

Special Olympics Texas
Explore year-round sports training and athletic competitions in various Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.
sotx.org

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD)
Learn about efforts to help people with developmental disabilities achieve their potential for independence, productivity, and integration into their communities.
tcdd.texas.gov

Texas Foster Care Handbook for Children, Youth, & Young Adults
Learn about supports available through the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Child Protective Services (CPS), including transitional services for older youth.
dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/documents/foster-care-handbook.pdf

Find the nearest office for your **local authority** to learn about programs and services to support independent living. The "***Spotlight on Supports***" on page 51 describes the **local intellectual and developmental disability authority (LIDDA), local mental health authority (LMHA), and the local behavioral health authority (LBHA)**. (resources.hhs.texas.gov/pages/find-services)

Transportation



Access to transportation is important for any adult to be able to get around in their community. The options to get where you need to go will vary in each community. As you plan for your transition to adult life, it's important to consider the transportation that is available in the community where you plan to live as an adult. It is also important to plan for any supports you may need.

First, think about transportation options that may be available in your community. There are safety considerations for all of the following options. Be sure you know the rights and responsibilities of drivers and passengers for any form of transportation.

Types of transportation

- **Driving a Car:** To drive any car you will need a driver license. You may be able to complete a driver education program through your school, with your parents, a community agency, or a private company. Some programs cost money. You will also need to pass a test to be issued a driver license.



- **Public Transit:** Your community might have buses, shuttles, or trains to get around. These options usually have fixed routes and schedules and charge a small fare.
- **Taxis (also called taxicabs or cabs):** Vehicles that can take people from a pick-up and drop-off location decided by the customer (not a specific route). Passengers can call the taxi company to schedule a ride.
- **Rideshare:** Similar to taxis, but passengers use an app downloaded to a device, such as a mobile phone, to schedule a ride.
- **Bicycle:** Some communities have bike lanes in roads to help riders stay safe from cars. There may be trails that are for biking or walking only.
- **Walking:** The first Friday in April is National Walk to Work day! Check out your community for places where it is safe to walk. Look for sidewalks or trails and pedestrian crosswalks.
- **Other ways to get around:** People have come up with creative solutions to get from one place to another without a car. Depending on the road rules and safety conditions, options such as golf carts, skateboards, bicycles, or scooters may work well.

Specialized transportation options

- **Driving accommodations:** If you plan to drive a car, visit the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to learn more about driver license requirements and **allowable test accommodations**: dps.texas.gov/apps/DriverLicense/customer_service/ADA.aspx. There are **adaptive driving programs** (aded.net/page/230) with specialists who can adapt instruction to meet the needs of the individual. See the "***Spotlight on Supports***" on page 37 for information about **optional indicators for your driver license or vehicle registration** if you have a disability that affects communication.

- **Public transit accommodations:** Many buses, shuttles, and trains have a lift for wheelchairs and special seats for people with disabilities. You can call your local transportation agency or check their website for options.

- **Paratransit:** Paratransit helps people with disabilities who can't use the regular bus service in their area due to a disability. Some people can use paratransit for all trips, while others can only use it in certain situations. There is typically a charge for paratransit, but it cannot cost more than twice the regular fare.

- **Rideshare Supports:**
  - **Uber WAV** (wheelchair-accessible vehicle; uber.com/us/en/ride/uberwav/)**:** Uber WAV makes it easy for people using scooters or wheelchairs to get a ride. The drivers have a special certification to help people with disabilities get in and out of the vehicle. If you have a service animal, they can come with you in the Uber WAV. You can also bring other people if there are enough seats and seatbelts.
  - **LyftUp** (lyft.com/lyftup/jobs-access)**:** In select Texas cities, Lyft Up tries to ensure everyone can get transportation that's not too expensive and works well. If you need rides for job interviews or work and can't pay, you can see if your area has a service. For free rides through Lyft Up, you might need to talk to your local Goodwill or United Way. If Lyft Up doesn't have special rides in your area, these agencies might know about other free services.

- **Agency services:** Some agencies that provide support for people with disabilities may offer transportation assistance for eligible consumers. For example, Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) (twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation/adults) lists **transportation services, including bus vouchers and vehicle modification**, as options to help people get to and from their job. Medicaid beneficiaries and their children may be eligible for **Nonemergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)** (txhealthsteps.com/static/courses/MTP-TUT-21/sections/section-1-3.html). These are transportation services for health care appointments, such as **Demand Response Transportation Services (DRTS)**, provided through Texas Health and Human Services (HHS). Transportation is a service available through some of the **Medicaid waiver programs**.

- **Friends and family:** Some adults **establish a network of drivers** who can help them get to places in the community. This can be a formal network, with members providing days and times they are available or committing to a certain number of trips. It can also be an informal group of people who the person can call when they need a ride.

- **Air Travel:** Some airports offer special assistance for travelers with disabilities, such as a lanyard to receive additional support from airport staff if you have a hidden disability. Airlines offer assistance to passengers with disabilities (transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/wheelchair-and-guided-assistance). When booking your trip, contact the airline to discuss your needs and arrange for support.

How did planning for transportation help me? One student's story:



Hi, I'm Drew! I was born too early so I had a hard time learning how to talk. But now, my friends and family say I'm great at speaking up!

I always loved going to school, but high school was tough for me because my friends started driving and getting jobs on their own. I wanted a job, but I didn't have a way to get there.

I talked to my CTE teacher about it. She was one of those teachers you can talk to about anything! She came to my ARD meeting and talked about how I had a lot of skills for different types of jobs. It felt good to hear that from her. She asked if there was anything that special education could do to help me with transportation, since it was my disability keeping me from getting a driver license.

We ended up finding ways to practice using the city bus as part of my Career Prep class. I didn't like the first job I had, but it really helped to learn the bus route.

These days I take the bus to my job at a pizza shop. I like making my own money, talking to customers, and being part of a team. Sometimes when I'm riding on the bus I see other places where I might want to work someday.

I'm grateful to have a way to get around. The bus doesn't go everywhere, so I have to ask friends or family for rides sometimes. I'm proud to live as independently as possible.

I'm lucky to have a supportive family and good transportation. You and your family might want to get involved in local planning to ask for better transportation services in your community.

My life, my voice: Self-determination in transportation planning

- ☐ Explore transportation options in your community and make a list of important phone numbers and websites.
- ☐ Practice sharing details about your trip with trusted adults. For example, texting your parents to let them know where you are going, who is driving, and what time you expect to be home.
- ☐ Learn about your rights and responsibilities for the transportation options you plan to use, such as driving or using rideshare. Plan for any safety concerns.
- ☐ Practice arranging your own rides, such as calling paratransit to request a bus ride to an upcoming appointment.
- ☐ Keep important information with you at all times, such as your home address, where you want to go, your phone number, and a list of people to call if there is an emergency. Use a smartphone app or keep the information in your wallet to protect your privacy.

What skills do you already have? What would you like to be able to do next?

Spotlight on supports: Texas Driving with Disability

Did you know Texas has an initiative that focuses on helping the interaction between law enforcement and drivers with disabilities? Now Texans have the option of disclosing "Communication Impediment" on their driver license, state ID, or vehicle registration. This will alert officers of a potential communication challenge.

You should receive information from your school about Texas Driving with Disability if you:

- » are at least 16 years old,
- » receive special education or 504 services, and
- » have a health condition or disability that may make communication difficult.

Texas Driving with Disability is not an adapted driver education program.
You can find more information about Texas Driving with Disability on the TEA website (tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/texas-driving-with-disability).

*What if you want to know more about your plan for transportation services? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

Do I receive specialized transportation services through school? If so, what supports will I need after I graduate?

What transportation options do you recommend for me to meet my postsecondary goals?

What are the options for students to learn travel skills at school, such as driver education classes or travel training?

Questions to ask a Transporation Provider

What services do you offer? Where and how are those services provided?

What do I need to qualify for your service?

What is the cost for your service? Are there options to buy a membership or to purchase multiple trips at one time?

Are there any days or times when services are not provided?

What happens if I need to cancel?

How far in advance would I need to schedule a ride? Can I call to schedule a ride for the same day?

Are your vehicles accessible?

Can I bring a support person or service animal?

Use this space to write other questions you have about transportation.

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your transportation planning.

Resources for transportation

Lyft-Job Access
Find rides for job interviews or work by utilizing this service.
lyft.com/lyftup/jobs-access

Nonemergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)
Use this program to schedule transportation services for health care appointments.
txhealthsteps.com/static/courses/MTP-TUT-21/sections/section-1-3.html

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) - Transportation
Find resources focused on transportation to work for people with disabilities.
dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employment-supports/transportation

Texas Department of Motor Vehicles - Disabled Parking, Placards & Plates
Find information on how to obtain parking placards and/or license plates for people with disabilities.
txdmv.gov/motorists/disabled-parking-placards-plates
Application: txdmv.gov/sites/default/files/form_files/VTR-214.pdf

Texas Department of Public Safety - Assistance for People with Disabilities
Request accommodations at your local driver license office.
dps.texas.gov/apps/DriverLicense/customer_service/ADA.aspx

Texas Department of Transportation - Texas Transit Agencies
Discover metropolitan, urban, and rural transit systems.
txdot.gov/discover/texas-transit-agencies.html

Texas Driving with Disability
Learn about options to indicate communication needs on your driver license or vehicle registration.
TexasDrivingWithDisability.com

Texas Workforce Commission - Vocational Rehabilitation - Adults
Provides transportation assistance to individuals with disabilities.
800-628-5115 | twc.texas.gov/programs/vocational-rehabilitation/adults

The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists
Find specialists who support driving independence for people with disabilities through services such as evaluation, training, and modified equipment.
info@aded.net | 866.672.9466 | aded.net/page/725

Uber WAV
Find drivers with special certifications who make it easy for people using scooters or wheelchairs to get a ride.
uber.com/us/en/ride/uberwav/

Resources for transportation continued

U.S. Department of Transportation - Wheelchair and Guided Assistance
Explore assistance available for passengers with disabilities while at the airport. When booking your trip, contact the airline to discuss your needs and arrange for support.
transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/wheelchair-and-guided-assistance

Technology



In our world, technology is everywhere. Technology isn't just about gadgets and screens. Technology can be any tool that supports your success in places like school or work. It includes ways to participate in conversations and in the community. As you plan for your transition to adult life, keep technology in mind. The following pages describe some of the ways that technology can be used to improve life for people with disabilities.

Do you use AT in your classes, on the job, at home, or in the community? Check out the examples of different types of AT to support different disabilities.

Did You Know?

Any tool that decreases the challenges of a person's disability can be considered **assistive technology (AT)**. These tools can be high-tech, mid-tech, low-tech, hardware, software, or equipment. You can explore the library of essential AT tools and find guides for selecting the right tools at Texas AT Support: at.tea.texas.gov

Low-tech tools

These tools do not require complex systems and, in many cases, do not require electricity.



Pencil Grip



Communication Board



Walking Cane

Mid-tech tools

These tools typically include electronics and require a power source.



Calculator



Audio Book



Adapted Keyboard

High-tech tools

These tools often use complex electronic systems or digital components. Their advanced features may require specialized knowledge or skills to program or repair the device.



Braille Notetaker



Speech recognition software



Electric Wheelchair

Technology on the job

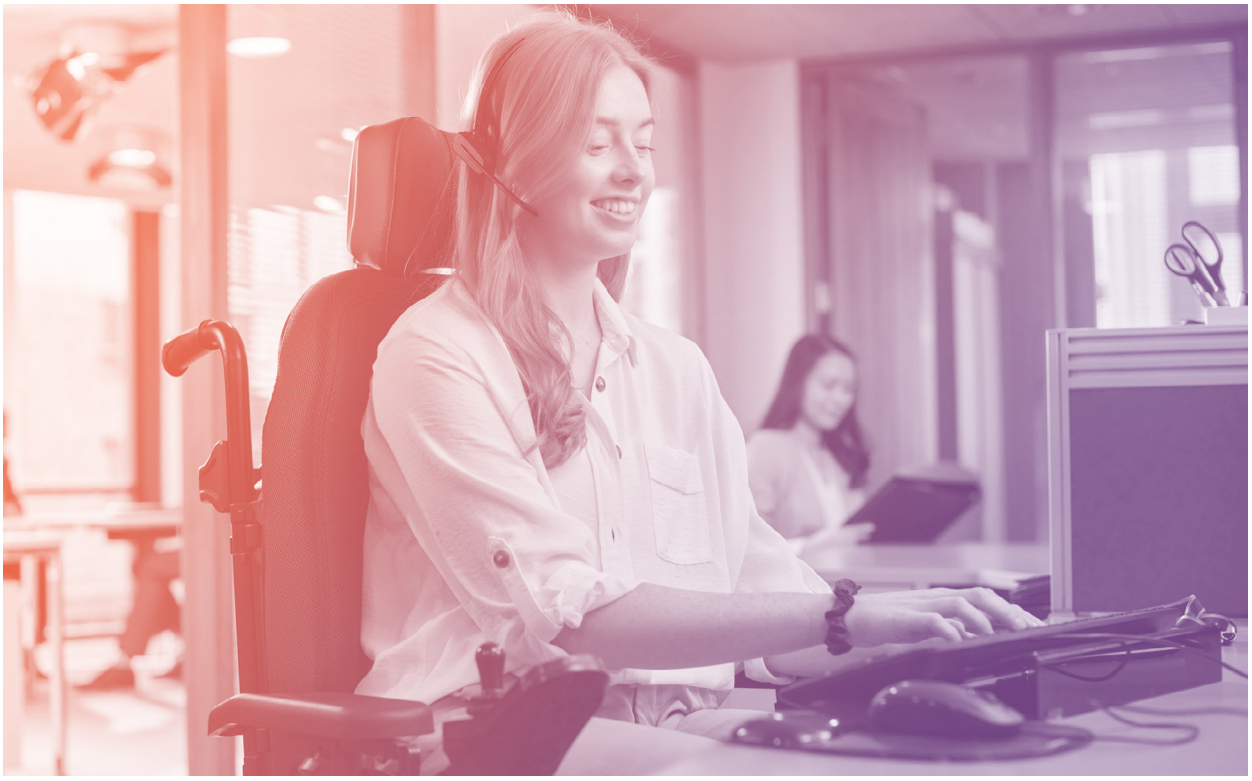
Technology is an important part of most jobs. Employees will likely use email to communicate, software to create work documents, and websites to enter vacation leave. But what about specific supports that some people may need to to do their job? Think about how AT can help you be successful in your career.

For example, someone with a visual impairment might use large print or highlighters to help them read documents. Someone who uses a wheelchair might use a ramp to enter the building and an adjustable desk to use their computer. Specialized devices can be used to allow someone with nontraditional communication to speak with co-workers or customers. Smartphone apps can help someone focus on work tasks and set alarms to manage time.

Technology at home and in the community

People use technology at home and in the community. We use personal computers, voice assistants like Alexa and Siri, and smart phones to talk, text, email, and more. But what about other supports that some people may need at home and in the community? How might AT support you better at home and in your community?

For example, if someone has trouble hearing they might use visual alerts for fire and carbon monoxide alarms. They may also use smartphone apps to transcribe a conversation when an ASL interpreter is unavailable. People who can't move easily might use special bars in the bathroom or tools to help them reach things.



Planning for Technology in Adulthood

What are your strengths and goals for technology? Use the checklist on this page to think about the technology skills needed by most adults. Identify the skills you have already learned to do on your own (green column), the skills you want to learn (yellow column), and any skills you want to establish support to be able to do (red column). You can use this list to talk with your family or teachers about your goals for technology.

	After I graduate from high school:		
	I will continue to do this on my own	I will be able to do this on my own after practicing it in school.	I will need ongoing support to do this
Basic Computer Skills:			
Turning on and off a computer	☐	☐	☐
Using a mouse and keyboard	☐	☐	☐
Understanding what is on the desktop and how to use it	☐	☐	☐
Opening and closing software applications	☐	☐	☐
Managing files and folders	☐	☐	☐
Internet Skills:			
Choosing a web browser	☐	☐	☐
Conducting web searches	☐	☐	☐
Navigating websites	☐	☐	☐
Practicing online safety and privacy	☐	☐	☐
Managing email accounts	☐	☐	☐
Office Productivity:			
Using word processors (e.g., Microsoft Word)	☐	☐	☐
Creating spreadsheets (e.g., Microsoft Excel)	☐	☐	☐
Making presentations (e.g., Microsoft PowerPoint)	☐	☐	☐
Using cloud storage services (e.g., Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive)	☐	☐	☐
Communication Tools:			
Using instant messaging apps (e.g., text messaging, WhatsApp)	☐	☐	☐
Participating in video conferences (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams)	☐	☐	☐
Safely managing social media accounts	☐	☐	☐
Engaging in email communication effectively	☐	☐	☐
Utilizing spell check and grammar tools	☐	☐	☐
Using digital calendars and reminders (e.g., Google Calendar)	☐	☐	☐
Setting up alerts and notifications	☐	☐	☐
Assistive Technology:			
Identifying and using appropriate assistive technologies	☐	☐	☐
Customizing accessibility settings on various devices	☐	☐	☐
Troubleshooting and fixing technology	☐	☐	☐
Selecting and using adaptive software and hardware	☐	☐	☐

How did technology help me? One student's story:



Hi, I'm Terri, and I'm 23 years old. Growing up, I faced challenges with my health. That might sound scary, but my parents and teachers taught me how to use different tools to help me manage my health on my own. I have diabetes, which means I must watch my blood sugar levels. To help me with this, I use a glucose monitor. It's a small device that checks my blood sugar so I can make sure I stay healthy and strong.

But that's not all. I also have a visual impairment, so I use a cane to help me get around safely. My cane is like my trusty sidekick, guiding me through the world and helping me navigate obstacles. With each tap, I can feel the ground beneath me and know where to go next. I keep a magnifier with me so I can read anything printed, like prices when I'm shopping in a store.

On top of that, I have a hearing impairment, so I wear hearing aids to help me hear better. These tiny devices sit behind my ears and help amplify sounds so I can communicate with others more easily.

Keep Reading

Look through the other student stories to see how they are using technology.

Even though I face these challenges, I don't let them hold me back. With the help of my assistive technology, I can live my life to the fullest. I can use my cane and hearing aids while I am working at my aunt's flower shop, and I make sure to check my blood sugar levels and take breaks when I need to. Without my assistive technology, I would not be where I am!

My life, my voice: Self-determination in technology

- ☐ Make a list of the technology you use the most in school. What do you like to use, and why do you like it?
- ☐ Make a list of techology you use at home. What is fun to use? What was hardest to learn to use?
- ☐ Think about the types of jobs you want to have and talk to someone in that career field about the technology they use in their job.
- ☐ Talk with your family and friends about ways they use technology to make their lives easier.
- ☐ Ask your teachers about their recommendations for using technology safely.
- ☐ Review the list of technology skills on page 43. Choose one or two skills to work on this year.

What skills do you already have? What would you like to be able to do next?

Spotlight on supports:

Easterseals

Do you know about Easterseals Rehabilitation Center? Assistive technology helps people with physical disabilities do more things on their own. At Easterseals, they have a special team that helps with this. There are tools to try out and people who can teach you how to use them. This team also helps find ways to pay for these tools. If you want to learn more, you can click on the following link or call 812-492-0659.

www.easterseals.com/in-sw/programs-and-services/assistive-technology-solutions/
www.easterseals.com/programs-and-services/employment-training/wfd-assistive-technology.html

Job Accommodation Network

Did you know there's a website that can help you find tools to help you in your job? It's called the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). They have lots of free, helpful advice about tools you can use at work, from low-tech to high-tech. It's a great place to go if you need some help figuring out what tools may work best for you.

Visit askjan.org to learn more about accommodations on the job.

*What if you want to know more about your plan for technology? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

Do I currently use assistive technology in my classes? If so, what?

Are there skills I can develop to improve my access to technology?

What technology options or assistive technology do you recommend for me to meet my postsecondary goals?

After I graduate, who can help me manage my assistive technology?

Use this space to write other questions you have about technology.

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your technology planning.

Resources for technology and AT

Online learning
Learn about AT through resources such as:

Assistive Technology Internet Modules (ATIM)
atinternetmodules.org

Texas AT Support
at.tea.texas.gov

Accessibility features
Discover options to personalize your technology, such as:

Google Accessibility
about.google/belonging/disability-inclusion/product-accessibility

Apple Accessibility
apple.com/accessibility

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)
Consider the list of technology features to meet your unique needs for reading.
aem.cast.org/use/personalizing-reading

Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology
Understand the recommendations for including AT in transition planning.
qiat.org/indicators/indicator-6-at-in-transition

Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP)
Explore vouchers for basic specialized assistive equipment or services.
hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/deaf-hard-hearing/stap-services

Texas Technology Access Program (TTAP)
Explore programs that support AT access for Texans with disabilities.
ttap.disabilitystudies.utexas.edu

Talk with school staff in roles that support AT, such as:

- Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Physical Therapist (PT)
- Recreational Therapist (RT)
- Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)
- Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)
- Teachers of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (TODHH)
- Orientation & Mobility (O&M) Specialist
- Assistive Technology (AT) Specialist

Financial



By now, you have probably thought about money in many ways. Maybe you decided how to spend your allowance. Maybe you heard your family talking about paying bills. Maybe you have a job where you earn a paycheck. As you become an adult, you will need to make more decisions about money.

The following few pages will describe some of the financial support options available to adults with disabilities. Think about any financial support you might need to:

- Have a place to live in the **community**
- Manage and pay for **health care**
- Have a **career** while keeping disability benefits
- Pay for **college** or other postsecondary education

As you explore the options, keep in mind that you will need to qualify for any services. Qualifying for services includes:



- Documentation of your disability
  - The definition of "disability" can change depending on the program.
  - The documentation needed to prove you have a disability will vary depending on the program.

- Application process
  - The timeline for applying before you hope to receive services may vary. For some programs, you need to contact an agency years before you can access services. For others, you need to wait until closer to the time you want services.
  - You may have to go through a redetermination of your eligibility while you are receiving services.

- Income and expenses can affect eligibility
  - Your family's income can be included for some programs, depending on your age.
  - Your income can be included for some programs if you have a job with a paycheck.
  - Disability-related expenses can sometimes be deducted from your income, such as the cost of medical equipment.
  - Other savings or money you receive might be included to determine eligibility.

Now that you know what to consider to qualify for services, see the following pages to find information about specific financial programs to support your goals for **community** (including health care), **career**, and **college**.

Community, including Health Management

Medicaid Waivers

"Get on the list!" You may hear this phrase a lot when you are planning for adulthood with a disability. This list refers to the interest list for Texas Medicaid waivers. Interest lists are sometimes called "waiting lists," because Texans often wait more than 10 years to receive the services they are eligible for!

Medicaid waiver programs include services to allow people with disabilities to live as independently as possible in their community. Some examples of services include therapies, direct care attendants, and home modifications.

Below are the seven Medicaid waiver programs in Texas. Each one has its own interest list. Consider adding your name to all the interest lists if you haven't already. Your family can add your name if you are not able to. Do it today! You can always decline services if you don't need them in the future.

If you are already on the interest lists and waiting for services, be sure to check your status (or check your child's status) each year around your birthday to be sure you are still on the lists.

- Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) — all ages
- Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) — all ages
- Home and Community-based Services (HCS) — all ages
- Medically Dependent Children's Program (MDCP) — age 20 and younger
- STAR+PLUS Home and Community-based Services (HCBS) — all ages
- Texas Home Living (TxHml) — all ages
- Youth Empowerment Services (YES) — ages 3 to 18

Medicare/Medicaid

Medicaid provides health coverage to eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults, and people with disabilities. *Medicare* provides health coverage to people who are 65 or older and certain younger people with disabilities. Some people are eligible to receive both Medicaid and Medicare.

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) account

ABLE accounts are special savings accounts that allow people with disabilities to receive a paycheck or save money without losing disability benefits such as SSI or Medicaid.

Social Security Disability Benefit Programs

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides funding for living expenses to children or adults with disabilities
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) provides funding to disabled workers and their dependents
- Childhood Disability Benefits (Disabled Adult Child) provides funding based on parent's contribution to Social Security through work history

Career

Work Incentive Programs

You will have options to earn some income without losing access to services. If you receive financial assistance or health benefits, ask your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor about work incentives such as:

- Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)
- Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)
- Blind Work Expense (BWE)
- Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS)
- Trial Work Period (TWP)
- Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE)
- Grace Period
- Ticket to Work (TTW)

See "***Careers***" beginning on page 17 for information about VR supports.

College

- Financial aid and scholarships are available for people with and without disabilities. You might be able to apply for a scholarship based on your specific disability or other circumstances related to your disability.

- Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step to learning more about financial aid and other ways to pay for college. See the questions to ask your high school counselor on page 27 about completing the FAFSA.

- Some people who are eligible for services through VR are able to receive tuition reimbursement or funding for other college expenses. Ask your VR counselor about these options.

How did financial planning help me? One parent's story:



My daughter Lucia is 28 years old. She loves spending time with friends, dancing, and going out to restaurants. She also has an intellectual disability, a seizure disorder, and is deaf-blind. She's lucky to have a large family, so she's never bored! There's always someone around to hang out with.

Lucia was eligible for special education from birth. Her therapists and teachers told us to "get on the list," but we were too busy trying to adjust to everything she needed.

We also hoped her disability would get better as she got older. If we could go back in time, we would get on the interest lists for Medicaid waivers as soon as she got her first diagnosis. We finally added her name to the lists when she was 15 after she started having seizures.

Our ARD committee told us when she turned 17 that we would lose our rights to make decisions for her when she turned 18, even though her disability makes it hard for her to understand her options or make big decisions. We spent a long time thinking about guardianship. We decided it was best for our family to make some decisions for Lucia. A judge awarded limited guardianship for financial and medical purposes. I'm so glad we had time to plan as a family, so we were ready to support her goals. She helps us make decisions by letting us know if she likes a doctor or nurse or choosing a fun thing to do after taking her seizure medication.

Lucia was eligible for special education after she earned her graduation credits and took all her state assessments. Our whole family came out for the commencement ceremony, and Lucia had so much fun! We treated her like a graduate, but she came back for 18+ the next year. That helped us a lot because we started figuring out what her day could look like and how we could support her schedule. We visited some adult day programs in our area and didn't find anything that matched her goals. We worked with her teachers to figure out what to look for when we interviewed personal care attendants. It was hard to find someone who already knew tactile sign language, so we talked with her support team to figure out how to teach people in her life how to communicate with her.

Transition planning helped us understand which agencies to connect with to have all the right supports when she graduated. We wanted her to have independence and to be part of our community. We also knew she would need a lot of support. Sometimes it felt impossible to imagine a good life for her, so let me tell you that it's normal to feel overwhelmed! Keep asking questions, and you will find your way to a life that works for you and your family.

My life, my voice: Self-determination in money management

- ☐ Think about the difference between things you "need" and things you "want."
- ☐ Find a budgeting system that works for you. Practice spending, saving, and sharing your money in ways that help you meet your goals.
- ☐ Know your rights about who can see or share information about your money.
- ☐ Review your financial records and ask someone you trust to help you understand what they mean for your budget.
- ☐ Participate in training to manage your money. You may learn money management during classes in high school or through services such as HCS or your local Center for Independent Living (CIL).

What skills do you already have? What would you like to be able to do next?

Spotlight on supports: Meet the LIDDA Service Coordinator

One of the community-based programs available through Health and Human Services (HHS) is called the **local intellectual and developmental disability authority (LIDDA)**. The LIDDA is available for people who meet the disability criteria or meet other crisis services criteria. The LIDDA can help you add your name to the interest list for Medicaid waivers. You can think of the LIDDA as a one-stop-shop for medical, social, educational, and other financial supports that will help your quality of life and participation in the community. The person who can help you navigate services might be called a "service coordinator" or a "case manager."

The LIDDA service coordinator can:

- » Facilitate meetings to develop a Person-Directed Plan (PDP). This plan lists goals that are important to you, based on what you share during your PDP meeting. Those closest to you can also share what they know about what's important to you.
- » Develop an individual plan of care (IPC). This plan lists all the services from HCS and other organizations that you will receive for that year.
- » Direct you to other services and benefits that can help you be as independent as possible.

There are also community-based programs called the **local mental health authority (LMHA)** and **local behavioral health authority (LBHA)** to coordinate services for people who need support to manage a mental illness. The LBHA can also help with substance abuse.

Contact your local authority if you will need services to live independently at any point in your life. To find your local authority, visit the HHS website: resources.hhs.texas.gov/pages/find-services

*What if you want to know more about your plan for financial support? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

Will I need support to manage my money when I am an adult? If so, what kind of support do you recommend?

Where can students on my campus learn skills for budgeting and money management?

What skills can I learn during school to help me manage my money when I'm an adult?

How can I practice sharing information about my disability and the supports that work for me to manage my money?

Are there agencies that would be helpful for my financial planning needs?

Questions to ask an agency representative

This representative is anyone outside of the school who can help you navigate the options for financial assistance. They might be a service provider, Work Incentive Programs Assistance (WIPA), or someone from a CIL.

What services am I eligible to receive?

What documentation is required when I apply for services?

Is my family's income or only my income considered for eligibility?

If I receive services from other programs, will it impact my eligibility for your program?

At what age do you start providing services? Is there an age limit to receive services?

Is there a waiting list to receive services? When should I apply?

What information would I need to submit once I start receiving services?

Are there other agencies or programs you would recommend for me?

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your financial planning.

Resources for financial planning

Benefits Eligibility Screening Tool
Find Social Security benefits administered by the U.S. Social Security Administration.
ssabest.benefits.gov

Social Security Administration (SSA)
Explore information on retirement, disability, and survivor's benefits.
ssa.gov

Special Needs Alliance
Use the directory to find an attorney for special needs planning.
specialneedsalliance.org

Texas ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience)
Learn about options for saving funds to pay for many disability-related expenses critical to maintaining the individuals' health, independence, and quality of life.
texasable.org

Texas Long-Term Service and Supports (LTSS) Waiver Programs
Review the list of medicaid waiver programs and services.
hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/providers/resources/ltss-waivers.pdf

Texas Reality Check
Explore this website developed by the Labor Market & Career Information Department of the Texas Workforce Commission. It will show you how much your living expenses will cost and how much money you will need to earn to pay for them.
texasrealitycheck.com

The Arc's Center for Future Planning
Explore information and tools to help families plan for members with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
futureplanning.thearc.org

Ticket to Work Helpline
Contact the community work incentive coordinator (CWIC) at a work incentives planning and assistance program (WIPA). WIPA projects provide free benefits counseling to eligible Social Security and Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries to help them make informed choices about work.
choosework.ssa.gov/contact

Health

Think about the last time you went to the doctor. Who scheduled your appointment? Who talked to the doctor? Where are the records from that visit? These questions are part of planning for the transition to adult health care.

Your health includes physical and emotional wellness. Some people need regular visits to doctors or therapists to manage their health, while others need occasional visits. Sometimes people need more support from doctors while they recover from an injury or adjust to a new medication, and they need less support over time. Every adult will need to make decisions about their health during their life.

Doctors who treat children are called pediatricians. When children grow up, they need to find a doctor who treats adults. When you turn 18, there are some important changes in your health care.

- Your medical information is not allowed to be shared without your permission.
- Your doctor will talk to you, not your family.
- You can ask someone to help you understand your medical options, make decisions about your health, or tell the doctor what you want.
- You can ask your doctor to let someone you trust be able to see your medical records.
- You can ask trusted family and friends for support to make decisions about your health.

You will have options to pay for health care costs. You might have private insurance, or you might be able to get insurance through your job. You may be able to stay on your parents' insurance. You might be eligible for Medicaid or Medicare. See the "***Financial***" topic on page 48 for more resources related to paying for health care.

Think about any support you will want to manage your health.

- ☐ Find a new doctor or specialist.
- ☐ Make medical appointments.
- ☐ Explain health needs.
- ☐ Manage medical information, including insurance.
- ☐ Understand the options or communicate decisions about health care.
- ☐ Fill prescription medications and refill as recommended.
- ☐ Take medication as prescribed.
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I can take care of these on my own.



How did health care transition planning help me? One student's story:



Hi, I'm Loralee. When I was eight, the doctors told my family that I might not survive the injuries from a car accident. Well, I'm 27 now, and I've adjusted to a lot of the adulting you have to do when you grow up.

Since the car accident, I learned to use a wheelchair with a switch and a machine to talk. I have an attendant to help me with things like eating and getting dressed. My husband and I live in a duplex, right next door to a really cool couple. We host Sunday night dinner every week and invite our neighbors and other friends.

Transition planning during high school was scary at first because I couldn't imagine life without my parents right there to help me. My dad made all the doctor appointments, and my stepmom always went with me to explain what they needed to know about my disability. She also helped them understand who I really am, you know? Like, beyond the wheelchair. It was nice having someone to do that because it can be hard for me to talk when I'm in a stressful situation or when I think people are talking down to me. I used to just shut down.

My ARD committee talked about the support I would need after graduation, and I remember thinking, "is there anything I won't need?" I couldn't imagine what "independence" could look like for me. They broke it down into smaller steps that I could do each year. My family made an appointment with my pediatrician to talk about finding a doctor who treats adults. I asked a few questions during that visit. When we found a new doctor, my stepmom came with me for the first few appointments, but she stayed in the waiting room while I talked to the doctor by myself. Things like that helped build my confidence.

At school, my teachers helped me program my device to quickly share information about me. This capability helped when I was stressed and shutting down. My speech therapist helped me find an app for my phone to keep my medical information. I practiced talking about myself and asking questions with my teachers and the school nurse. At home, we came up with a medical summary I could use during appointments. I keep it updated, especially if my medication changes or when I get new insurance. Every time I go to my doctor, I review it with her to be sure I didn't miss anything. We add any visits to other specialists.

My husband has Power of Attorney for medical decisions if I'm ever too sick to speak for myself. We hire and fire our personal care attendants. We're never bored! We stay busy with work, friends, fun, and paperwork to manage our support and keep us healthy and independent.

My life, my voice: Self-determination in health care

- ☐ Make choices and set goals for your health, like exercise or healthy eating habits.
- ☐ Learn to describe your disability and decide who you feel comfortable talking to about your personal health care/medical needs.
- ☐ Know your rights about who can see or share your medical information.
- ☐ Practice managing your health care by carrying your insurance card, making doctor appointments, or asking at least one question during a visit.
- ☐ Keep information like your doctor's names, insurance, and emergency contact in a place you can find it easily, such as a smartphone app.
- ☐ Know where to find your medical and health records. Ask someone you trust to help you understand what these records mean for you.
- ☐ Create a one-page medical summary. Talk with a trusted family member or doctor about what to include.

What skills do you already have? What would you like to be able to do next?

Spotlight on supports: Meet the Medicaid Case Manager

If you receive Medicaid, you may be assigned a case manager (sometimes called a "service coordinator") to help you manage your benefits. Service coordinators are provided by Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) health plan. Your case manager can help you understand your options for supporting your health needs. For example, you can ask your case manager about:

- » Finding and receiving services for your physical or emotional health
- » Benefits such as personal care attendants and personal care supplies
- » Referrals to specialists
- » Transportation to medical appointments
- » Referrals to community organizations to help with non-medical needs
- » Services that might not be covered by Medicaid, like help with food and housing
- » Other services to support your goals for your life

If you want to receive Medicaid, you can contact 2-1-1 (call 2-1-1 on your phone or visit 211texas.org) to ask about eligibility to receive benefits, including income limits. You can also ask about:

- » How to use the "spend down" process to account for medical costs with your income
- » How the "buy-in" program helps some children whose families make too much money to receive Medicaid, and allows some working adults with disabilities to qualify for Medicaid.

You can also see if you are eligible and apply by going to YourTexasBenefits.com.

*What if you want to know more about your plan for health care? First, see if you can find this information in your IEP. You, your family, or your supporter can always ask a member of your ARD committee for help to find the information. If you have more questions, reach out to the TED for your district or charter school. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Questions to ask your ARD committee

Will I need support to manage my health when I am an adult? If so, what kind of support do you recommend?

What skills can I learn during school that can help me manage my health when I'm an adult?

Are there agencies that would be helpful for my health care needs?

Questions to ask your pediatric doctor

When will I have to move to another doctor as an adult patient?

What doctors do you recommend for me to see when I'm an adult?

What would a new doctor need to know about me? Can you help me create a brief medical summary for me to use with new doctors?

Use this space to write other questions you have about managing your healthcare in adulthood.

Making Connections

The following list can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your planning for the transition to adult medical care.

Resources for health care

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program
Helps children 20 and younger who have special health care needs and people with cystic fibrosis of any age improve their health, well-being, and quality of life.
800-222-3986 | cshcn@hhsc.state.tx.us
hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/children-special-health-care-needs-program

Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
Find your local Public Health Regions (PHR) office and request information about case management services.
888-963-7111 | dshs.texas.gov/regional-local-health-operations/public-health-regions

Disability Programs (HHS)
Provides a range of services to Texans with disabilities that help ensure their well-being, dignity and choice. Programs also are in place to support family members who care for them.
hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip/programs-services/programs-children-adults-disabilities

Got Transition
Find resources for health care transition, such as sample IEP goals, readiness assessments, and setting up a Medical ID on your phone.
gottransition.org

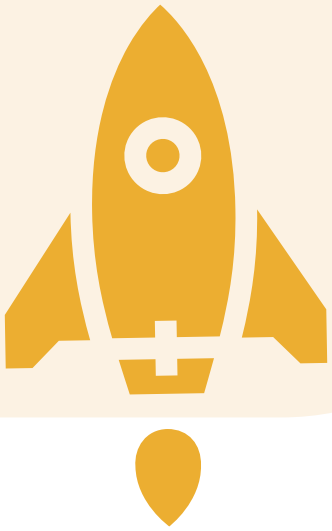
Medicaid
Understand health care benefits for low-income children and families and long-term services and supports for people with disabilities.
hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip

Texas Department of Insurance
Learn about insurance, check rates, and get help with your questions and complaints.
tdi.texas.gov

Your Texas Benefits
Apply for and manage benefits such as Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, CHIP, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash help.
yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home

Ask your pediatrician about making the transition to adult health care providers.

Taking Action



You and your family might be asking: What should we do now to prepare for adult life?
Where do we start?

Read each item in the lists on the following pages. Start with the list for your current age. You will find *skills* (things to learn) and *activities* (things to do).

- Check off any items you have completed.
- Circle any items you are working on or trying to put the right supports in place.

Use your list to talk with people who can help you plan for your life after high school. Find "***Making Connections***" throughout this Guide to explore resources. Update your list as you complete the items.

Take it one step at a time.

Find ways to increase your independence as you get closer to adulthood. Most important, don't give up!

Should I Check the Box?

Some of the items in these lists will take time to learn or complete. That's ok. You can feel confident to check that an item is "complete" if:

- You can demonstrate the skill independently.
- You can show that the activity was done. For example, a record of when you signed up for the Medicaid waiver interest lists.
- You have established long-term supports to be able to perform the skill. For example, having a representative payee to manage your budget.

Early Childhood: Birth to Age 3 and/or Age 3 to 5 (not in Kindergarten)

Skills and Activities (supported by family)

- [ ] Build awareness of strengths and interests during play.
- [ ] Make choices about spending or saving money, such as a piggy bank.
- [ ] Participate in chores at home.
- [ ] Talk about the jobs in your family.
- [ ] Put your child's name on the interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified. Keep a record of the confirmation.
- [ ] Learn about community helpers.
- [ ] Collaborate with your child's teacher to develop the IEP and to plan for the transition to elementary school.

Reflection:

Families: How can you support your child to build skills for self-determination?

What supports work best for your child to be able to make choices, solve problems, or regulate their emotions?

What do you do for your child that they can learn to do for themselves?

Notes:

Elementary School: Kindergarten-Grade 5

Skills and Activities (supported by family)

- [ ] Identify strengths, struggles, and learning style.
- [ ] Learn the purpose and contents of your individualized education program (IEP).
- [ ] Develop skills for money management, such as budgeting an allowance.
- [ ] Learn about your rights and responsibilities in your school, home, and community.
- [ ] Tell people how you feel and what is important to you. Use your voice, American Sign Language (ASL), an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device, picture symbols, or any way that works for you to communicate.
- [ ] Explore types of careers and talk with your family about what kind of job you want when you grow up.
- [ ] Attend ARD meetings: Introduce ARD committee members, and share your ideas about options in school.
- [ ] If you are on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check your status each year. Checking around your birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this.
- [ ] Learn what to do in an emergency.
- [ ] Practice working with others through sports or recreational activities.

Reflection:

Students: Think about the list on this page. Pick one thing you want to do before your next birthday. Who can help you?

Families: For each item, think about whether it is important TO your child or important FOR your child. For example, budgeting an allowance might be an important skill FOR your child, but shopping for things they like might be most important TO them. Address their interests and preferences when working on skills.

Notes:

Middle School/Junior High: Grades 6-8

Skills and Activities (student-led, with support as needed)

- [ ] Describe your strengths, struggles, and learning style.
- [ ] Participate in transition assessments.
- [ ] Practice using a budget to plan for spending, saving, and sharing.
- [ ] Take responsibility for schoolwork, keeping belongings organized, and your daily schedule.
- [ ] Tell people how you feel and what is important to you by using your voice, ASL, an AAC device, picture symbols, or any way that works for you to communicate.
- [ ] Research the types of careers that interest you and begin learning about education requirements for those fields.
- [ ] Learn about any health conditions, allergies, or medications you have and ask your doctor at what age they no longer provide care for young adults.
- [ ] Participate in ARD meetings. Share what works best for you in your classes.
- [ ] Explore high school graduation pathways, including endorsements. Complete your personal graduation plan (PGP) during 8th or 9th grade.
- [ ] Learn about career and technical education (CTE) classes available at middle and high school.
- [ ] If you are on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check your status each year. Checking around your birthday is a good way to remember to do this.
- [ ] Choose classes that match your career interests and increase your postsecondary education options.
- [ ] Arrange job shadowing or informational interviews to get an idea of what it's like to work in your chosen profession.

Reflection:

Students: Think about the list on this page. Pick one thing you want to do or learn before the next school year. Who can help you?

Families: For each item, think about ways to increase your child's independence. For example, can they take a more active role in making choices? Can they perform part of the skill? Can they practice performing the skill on their own, with an adult available for support? Collaborate with your child's teachers and ARD committee to find ways to safely increase their independence.

Notes:

High School: Grades 9-12

Skills and Activities (student-led, with support as needed)

- [ ] Talk to your school counselor and ARD committee about the graduation pathways, including endorsements and CTE programs of study, available at your school.
- [ ] Pursue a graduation plan that will allow you to meet your postsecondary goals, including CTE classes and other work-based learning opportunities that match your career goals.
- [ ] Update your Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) each year to show the classes you took and any changes to courses you want to take.
- [ ] Keep a list of extracurricular activities, awards, and honors.
- [ ] Complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) with help from your school counselor or sign an opt-out form if you choose not to complete or submit these applications.
- [ ] Before you graduate, develop your summary of performance (SOP) with your teachers.
- [ ] Find out if you will be eligible to receive special education services after meeting graduation requirements. These are often called 18+ services.
- [ ] Research entrance requirements and cost for any postsecondary education programs you want to pursue.
- [ ] Talk to your school counselor about accommodations you might need for college entrance exams.
- [ ] Learn about the difference in legal requirements for public schools in serving students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) compared to legal protections for people with disabilities in college, community, or career under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- [ ] Investigate support offered by the disability services office at colleges of interest.
- [ ] Gain job experience through school, weekend or summer jobs, or volunteer opportunities.
- [ ] Develop a resume.
- [ ] Practice filling out job applications and going through the interview process.
- [ ] Ask your Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (TVRC) or your ARD committee about Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) opportunities available through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).
- [ ] Explore options for living in your community, such as owning, renting, co-housing, dorms, and other residential options.
- [ ] Explore transportation options in your community (driver license, bus, taxi, other).
- [ ] If needed, explore specialized transportation options in your community and participate in travel training to learn ways to navigate your community independently. Travel training may be available through your school.
- [ ] Contact agencies that can provide needed services in adulthood to learn about eligibility and the application process.
- [ ] If you are on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check your status each year. Checking around your birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this.
- [ ] Build a network of support. Reach out to people in your life who might want to help you meet your goals. Ask your school if person-centered planning is available to help you establish your network.
- [ ] If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), ask your TVRC about work incentive programs to ensure you keep benefits while earning income.

- [ ] Learn about money management, including credit cards and banking fees.
- [ ] Obtain a driver license or state ID.
- [ ] Talk with your doctor and insurance company or benefits provider about what will change when you are an adult.
- [ ] Find primary and specialty care doctors who accept adults in their practices.
- [ ] Create a medical summary to use during doctor visits.
- [ ] Practice managing your own healthcare, such as filling prescriptions and following a medication schedule or describing any health conditions.
- [ ] Practice talking about your disability with trusted teachers. Describe the support you need to be successful in school, at home, or in the community.
- [ ] Practice describing your strengths.
- [ ] Learn about support to make legal decisions, such as using a supported decision-making agreement (SDMA) to allow a supporter to review options with you and communicate your decision.
- [ ] Manage your schedule and activities.
- [ ] Decide if you want your school to share information about you with agencies or invite agency representatives to your ARD meeting.
- [ ] Lead your ARD meetings by sharing information about your strengths, interests, goals, and disability-related needs.
- [ ] Consider leadership opportunities, such as mentoring younger students or joining student clubs.
- [ ] By your 17th birthday, review the information your school shares about the transfer of rights.
- [ ] Before your 18th birthday, decide if you need any support to make legal and other decisions. If you decide to have formal support for decisions in adulthood, be sure you have the necessary documentation in place by age 18.
- [ ] At age 18: Register to vote if you decide you want to participate in elections.
- [ ] At age 18: If you are male, register for Selective Service on your 18th birthday.

Reflection:

Students: Look at the lists in this chapter. What is something you want to add to your transition plan? How will you talk to your ARD committee about what you want?

Families: Find ways to continue stepping back and letting your child make decisions for more areas in their life. Talk as a family about supports for adulthood, including to make legal decisions.

Notes:

After High School: 18-22 and Throughout Adulthood

Skills and Activities (adult-led, with support as needed)

- [ ] Describe your strengths, your needs, and explain the supports that work for you.
- [ ] Tell the people in your life what you want, using your preferred communication method.
- [ ] Manage your money, including any benefits, paychecks, and other income.
- [ ] Manage required paperwork for any services or benefits you receive.
- [ ] Manage your health care, including insurance and medical expenses.
- [ ] Use job skills to advance in your career.
- [ ] Utilize transportation options in your community.
- [ ] Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at age 18 based on your income.
- [ ] Request needed accommodations at your job.
- [ ] Request accommodations from the college disability services office.
- [ ] Determine whether you want a family member or supporter to be able to see information for things like your bank accounts, credit cards, medical records, or report cards in college.

Reflection:

If you are staying enrolled in school to receive special education services after meeting graduation requirements: What do you want your day to look like when you are 25? Where will you go? What job will you have? Who are your friends? How will you get around without the school bus? What do you want to be learning? Are there degrees or certificates you want to pursue?

Use the time you have with support from the school to establish your adult schedule and any needed supports.

Notes:

What to know about your graduation options!

Foundation High School Program

The ***Foundation High School Program*** (tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/brochures/tea-brochures) identifies the requirements that all Texas public school students must meet to earn a high school diploma. The information on this page can help you understand graduation requirements. It's important to know about the opportunities available at your school and your options to receive support.

To earn a diploma through the Foundation High School Program, you need to earn at least 22 credits (or more if required by your school) in the following areas:

- 4 credits English
- 3 credits mathematics
- 3 credits science
- 3 credits social studies
- 2 credits languages other than English
- 1 credit fine arts
- 1 credit physical education
- 5 credits electives

A **course** is a learning opportunity (usually a class) that addresses curriculum in a subject area. A **credit** is a unit of measure awarded for successfully completing a high school course.

In addition to credits, you will need to take end-of-course (EOC) assessments for English I and II, Algebra I, Biology, and US History. Your school counselor can help you understand other requirements, like demonstrating proficiency in certain speech/communication skills.

Disability Supports

Your admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee will help you consider the special education services for your classes. Let's look at a few examples of adaptations for students with disabilities.

Accommodations reduce or even eliminate the effect of your disability on academic tasks, but do not change the learning expectations. Accommodations can change how you learn new information or how you show what you have learned. They do not change the mastery level set for all students in the course.

Modifications reduce the amount or the level of complexity in the curriculum for a course. You will be learning the same things, but you will not be expected to meet the mastery level that is set for all students in the course.

Think about one of the classes you are taking this year. Do you know if you are receiving accommodations or modifications in that class? Maybe you don't need any adaptations in that class!

Every student is eligible to earn the same diploma in Texas, no matter what type of support is needed. If you need modifications in any of your classes, talk to your ARD committee about whether that changes the graduation options that you want to pursue.

Endorsements

You can earn one or more special recognitions called endorsements as part of your high school diploma. An endorsement is a a series of classes that are grouped by interest or skill set. The classes help you learn a lot about a subject or prepare for a good job. Every career and technical education (CTE) program of study leads to an endorsement. Not all schools offer every endorsement, so check with your counselor on what your school offers.

To earn an endorsement, you will need to earn 26 credits, including additional credits in math, science, and electives.

Endorsement Areas

- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
- Business and Industry
- Arts and Humanities
- Public Services
- Multidisciplinary Studies

You can choose to earn additional recognitions called ***Performance Acknowledgements*** and the ***Distinguished Level of Achievement***.

Performance Acknowledgements

- Dual credit/college academic courses
- Bilingualism/biliteracy
- PSAT, PreACT, the SAT, or the ACT
- Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exams
- Earning a state-recognized or nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license

Distinguished Level of Achievement

- 4 credits in math (must include Algebra II)
- 4 credits in science
- Curriculum requirements for Foundation High School Program and at least one endorsement area

Talk with your school counselor about your plans for high school and beyond. Use your personal graduation plan to discuss classes you want to take and the timeline for earning your diploma. See the list of questions to ask your ARD committee on pages 8 and 27 for ideas about what to discuss as you plan for earning your diploma.

Responding to changes in adult life: *What to do if things don't go as planned*

Life can take some unexpected turns, and every adult should be ready to respond to changes. Agencies are available to help you with concerns you may have related to your disability.

Disability Discrimination

Office for Civil Rights
hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/disability

Disability Rights Texas
drtx.org

Receiving Appropriate Services From an Agency

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Disability Discrimination
twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/disability-discrimination

Legal Hotline for Texans
texaslawhelp.org/directory/legal-resource/legal-hotline-texans-texas-legal-services-center

Accommodations in Higher Education

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
highered.texas.gov/student-complaints

Job Loss

Contact your local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) office
webp.twc.state.tx.us/services/VRLookup

Contact your local Workforce Solutions office
twc.texas.gov/directory-workforce-solutions-offices-services

Register for Work in Texas
workintexas.com/vosnet

Finance or Housing

Your Texas Benefits
yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn

Find Help
findhelp.org

Your Safety

Department of Family and Protective Services Texas Abuse Hotline Website
txabusehotline.org | 1-800-252-5400

Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) advises victims of family violence to call the 24-Hour National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233) or TDD 800-787-3224.

If you are in an emergency and need help right away from the local police department, call 9-1-1.

Making Connections

Who can help?

As you plan for your transition to adulthood, you don't have to do everything on your own. Make connections to the agencies, people, and places that can help.

Did you notice the "***Making Connections***" sections for each topic in this guide? Use those lists to focus on supports for a specific topic. Circle any resources you want to learn more about. The lists on the following pages include resources that cover a variety of areas for transition planning.

Roadmap to Texas Transition Resources

Making connections to support YOUR transition plan starts here! Use the action plan on page 69 to begin your next steps toward support. Before you know it, you will have the resources you need to meet your postsecondary goals.

Resources

2-1-1 Texas
Connect with services by calling the free, anonymous social service hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
Dial 2-1-1 or (877) 541-7905 | 211texas.org

Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
Learn about services in your community that promote safe and healthy families and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
dfps.texas.gov/I_Am/foster-youth.asp

Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
Learn about services to protect the health of people, and the communities where they live, learn, work, worship, and play.
888-963-7111 | dshs.texas.gov

Directory of Community Resources for People with Disabilities
Discover organizations and agencies in Texas that provide disability-specific resources and services.
dcr.tamu.edu

Every accomplishment starts with a decision to try. – Gail Devers

Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)
Learn about programs to help families with food, health care, safety, and disaster services. These include the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Children's Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (SNAP) programs.
1-877-787-8999 | hhs.texas.gov

Medicaid Waiver Programs
Find an overview of services and eligibility, contact information, and a link to the HHSC website for each Medicaid waiver program.
txhealthsteps.com/static/courses/waivers/sections/section-1-4.html

SPEDTex
Explore information and resources to understand your disability and your rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
spedtex.org | 1-855-773-3839 | inquire@spedtex.org

Texas Workforce Solutions
Find workforce development services to help you find and keep good jobs.

Directory of Workforce Solutions Offices & Services
twc.texas.gov/directory-workforce-solutions-offices-services

TWS Rapid Engagement Team: VR Office Locator
512-936-6400 | webp.twc.state.tx.us/services/VRLookup | vr.office.locator@twc.state.tx.us

WorkInTexas.com: Job Matching Services
workintexas.com/vosnet

If you do not have access to a computer, ask your ARD committee or the TED to help you find the information you need.

My Connections

Areas I want to find support:

- ☐ Transition planning in my IEP
- ☐ Legal rights and self-determination
- ☐ Careers
- ☐ College
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Financial
- ☐ Health

One website I will visit this week: _____

One phone number I will call this month: _____

One service I will establish before I leave high school: _____

How was your transition to adulthood?

Post-School Outcomes Survey

One year after you exit from public school, you may be invited to take a short survey. This is called the Post-School Outcomes Survey (PSOS).

The PSOS is required for each state as part of the State Performance Plan (SPP). The purpose of the PSOS is to find out how students are doing after they exit. Are they enrolled in postsecondary education, such as college or a training program? Are they employed? What parts of their school experience were most helpful to connect them with positive post-school outcomes? Collecting this data can be used to guide improvements to special education and transition services at the local level.

How will I be contacted?

You may receive a call, text, email, or get a postcard in the mail asking you to participate in the PSOS. If you have any concerns about the invitation you receive, contact **SPEDTex**:

1-855-773-3839

inquire@spedtex.org

Who can complete the PSOS?

Exited students or their families may complete the survey. A personal identification number (PIN) is assigned to each exited student to be sure that duplicate responses are not counted twice. For example, if you are living at college and complete the survey after receiving a text message and your parent completes the survey after receiving a phone call, both responses will be connected to the same PIN.

What happens to my information if I decide to participate in the survey?

Survey results are reported as numbers and percentages. Names and other confidential information are not shared. Identifying information about the individual student or family is not included in the report.

How can I be sure I'm included?

As you exit public school, share your contact information with the school. **Talk to the registrar to be sure your personal email address and phone number are listed in their system.** Your school email address will no longer be available after you graduate. Give them contact information that you are likely to still be using one year after you graduate or exit.

Participating in this survey will benefit students across Texas. The more former students who participate, the more reliable and useful the data will be, particularly at the local level.

To learn more about the PSOS in Texas, visit: spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/resource-library/sppi-14-post-school-outcomes-survey



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