



Transition Planning: from school to adult life

What is transition planning and why is it important?

All students wonder, "What am I going to do with my life after school?" Schools use the transition planning process to help students with disabilities and their families plan for life after high school. There are many supports and services available for young adults with developmental disabilities after high school. Students and families must apply for these supports as part of transition planning. School services are available to your child until the end of the school year in which he/she turns 21, or until your child graduates with a Regents or local diploma, however each student should have a transition plan in place by age 18 or earlier (8 NYCRR 200.4(d)(2)(ix)) to ensure that services will be available when they need them.

Who can help with transition planning?

People who will help you learn about your choices include your high school guidance counselor, teachers, other school staff, family, and friends. A strong circle of support can help with the transition planning process.

What is a circle of support?

A group of people that you have freely chosen who help you think about your interests and goals, put them into words and make them happen.

- With your interests and goals in mind, your circle of support helps you make choices and decisions that help you take charge of your life.
- You choose the members of your circle of support. Some people you may choose are:
 - Family members, friends, neighbors, and others in your community
 - School staff including your teachers, school counselor, transition specialist, and support staff such as speech, occupational or physical therapist, social worker, psychologist, mental health provider
 - Service coordinators/case managers
 - Other service providers, including staff from:
 - Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)
 - Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)
 - Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
 - Office of Mental Health (OMH)

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

- Going to college or to a vocational or technical school
- Working in a community business
- Starting your own business
- Volunteering in your community
- Taking part in the creative arts, music, or dancing

For the phone number and e-mail address of the OPWDD Transition Coordinator in your area:

- Go to <http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/node/4785>
- E-mail student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov

Help with Finding a Job

ACCES-VR can work with you to explore job options and help you develop job skills. Usually, students start to work with ACCES-VR two years before they leave school. For more information, go to www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/do/transition.html or call 1-800-222-JOBS (5627).

How can OPWDD help?

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

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

If you don't already get OPWDD services, you will need to go through our Front Door process. A service coordinator will work with you and your circle of support to help you put together a plan for services that describes your strengths and abilities, and defines your goals and support needs. Our services include supports to help you develop job skills and get a job in the community, and to help you with daily living skills, to be more active in your community, and to be more independent.

Tips for parents and students

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

For more information about OPWDD's Front Door and supports and services in your area call the Regional Office for the county you live in:

OPWDD's Regional Offices

Region 1

800-487-6310 -

Alléghany,
Cattaraugus,
Chautauqua, Erie,
Genesee, Niagara,
Orleans Counties

585-241-5700 -

Chemung,
Livingston, Monroe,
Ontario, Schuyler,
Seneca, Steuben,
Wayne, Wyoming,
Yates Counties

Region 2

315-473-6978 -

Broome, Cayuga,
Chenango, Clinton,
Cortland, Delaware,
Essex, Franklin,
Hamilton, Herkimer,
Jefferson, Lewis,
Madison, Oneida,
Onondaga, Oswego,
Otsego, St.
Lawrence, Tioga,
Tompkins Counties

Region 3

518-388-0431 -

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Montgomery,
Rensselaer,
Saratoga,
Schenectady,
Schoharie, Warren,
Washington Counties

845-947-6100 -

Orange, Rockland,
Sullivan, Westchester
Counties

845-473-5050 -

Columbia, Dutchess,
Green, Putnam,
Ulster Counties

Region 4

Bronx:

718-430-0885

Brooklyn (Kings):

718-642-6000

Manhattan
(New York):

646-766-3222

Queens:

718-217-5890

Staten Island
(Richmond):

718-983-5233

Region 5

631-434-6100 -

Nassau, Suffolk
Counties



Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities

Visit our website at www.opwdd.ny.gov or
contact OPWDD's information line at (866) 946-9733.

For individuals with hearing impairment use
NY Relay System 7-1-1



Transition Planning

Front Door and Self-Directed Services

A Guide for Students in Transition

Information Line: (866) 946-9733 • www.opwdd.ny.gov

The Front Door

Through OPWDD's Front Door, you and your family will:

- Learn about the supports and services OPWDD offers,
- Find out about how to apply for OPWDD services
- Find out if you are eligible for OPWDD services,
- Identify the supports and services you want and need,
- Plan for getting the supports and services you want and need.

Not everyone can get OPWDD services. The decision about whether you can get OPWDD services (eligibility) is based on your disability and how much support you need. Front Door staff will help you through the steps to decide if you are eligible. Once you are found eligible for services, Front Door staff will talk with you and ask you questions (do an assessment). Front Door staff will use the information they learn from you about your strengths and needs to talk to you about the services that might be best to meet your needs in the way that works best for you. Next, you will work with a service coordinator to develop a service plan. OPWDD staff reviews the plan and approves the services you want and need. If you are a young adult, Front Door staff can help you as you prepare to transition from public or residential school to OPWDD services. Examples of adult supports you may need include:

- Support to live as independently as possible at home with your family or in your own home or apartment,
- Support to participate as much as you would like in your community,
- Housing supports,
- Employment training and supports, and
- Crisis prevention and response.

For more information on eligibility criteria or to apply for services, please visit the OPWDD website at http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/eligibility

Self-Direction

Going through the Front Door, you choose the supports and services that are best for you, and decide how those services are provided and who will provide them. You can also make the choice to self-direct your supports and services. You can make this choice when you are first planning your services or you can make the choice later when you already have services. You can choose to select and supervise your own staff and/or to manage your own budget.

- **Budget Authority:** You choose the services you want and need and who provides them – both staff and the agencies. With the help of your circle of support, you decide how the dollars with your OPWDD-approved self directed budget are spent.
- **Employer Authority:** You decide what agency you work with. You choose the staff you work with. You can decide if you want your staff to have special kinds of skills and experience and you can look for people to be your staff and send them to the agency you pick so they can hire them. You can decide when you want the staff to work, decide what they will do to help you, tell your staff what to do and when to do it (supervise them), and decide whether they are doing a good job (evaluate them).

If you are an adult and you can make informed choices and you are willing to do the work to be in charge of your self-directed services, you can choose to self-direct. Other people can help you do what needs to be done. These people are usually members of your circle of support. You can also choose one family member or other adult you name to help you or to self direct your supports and services for you. If you are not able to make informed choices, you can self-direct if a family member or other adult you name helps you make choices or co-manage supports and services. If you are under age 21 (a minor child), you can self-direct with the help of an adult who is a parent, legal guardian, family member, or other adult you choose.

Self-directed services can include supports to help you live at home with family or in the community by yourself or with a friend, and supports to be a more active member of your community. Staff can help you take part in activities you are interested in, like volunteering and enjoy your free time doing activities you choose, like sports and hobbies. Self-directed services can also include supports to help you find and keep a job, and can include help with paying for the place that you live (housing subsidy).

Individuals self-direct their supports and services using:

- **Self Direction with Employer and Budget Authority** – you and your circle of support develop a Self Direction plan and budget that include all the services and supports you need, including staff, training for your staff, transportation, the cost of some activities in your community and, in some cases, a housing subsidy. The total dollars allowed in each budget is based on a Personal Resource Allocation (PRA) and, if you are asking for a housing subsidy, your income. For more information, go to http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/supports_for_independent_and_family_living_consolidated_supports_and_services
- **Self-Directed Community Habilitation** – you choose the staff you work with, decide when you want the staff to work and decide what they will do to help you. You can look for people to be your staff and send them to the agency you pick so they can hire them. Your staff works with you on the skills and activities you choose both at home and in your community.

The **New York Self-Determination Coalition website** can give you more information on self-determination and self-direction: <http://nyselfd.org/>

For more information about OPWDD's Front Door, how to make self direction part of your transition plan, and supports and services in your area, visit the **OPWDD website** at <http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/node/124>.

To connect with your local OPWDD Transition Coordinator,

- E-mail student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov or
- Contact OPWDD's information line at (866) 946-9733 or TTY: (866) 933-4889 or
- Call the Regional Office nearest you:

Region 1

585- 241-5700 - Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuylar, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates Counties

800-487-6310, 716-517-2000 - Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans Counties

Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, Washington Counties

845-947-6100 - Orange, Rockland, Sullivan, Westchester Counties

845-473-5050, 914-332-8945 - Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Putnam, Ulster Counties

Region 2

315-473-6978 - Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Clinton, Cortland, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Otsego, St. Lawrence, Tioga, Tompkins Counties

Region 4

Bronx: 718-430-0885

Brooklyn: 718-642-6000,

Manhattan: 646-766-3222

Queens: 718-217-4242

Staten Island: 718-983-5200

Region 3

518-370-7429 - Albany, Fulton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga,

Region 5

631-434-6100 - Nassau, Suffolk Counties



Transition Planning

Being Active in Your Community and Getting a Job

A Guide for Students in Transition

Information Line: (866) 946-9733 • www.opwdd.ny.gov

Getting a Job – Employment Services

OPWDD employment services use person-centered planning to help you identify your strong points, skills, and interests. Employment staff help you put together your resume, get ready for job interviews, find the right job, and find ways to get places in the community and learn to go places with less help. Employment staff work with you and your family to find jobs in the community, apply for jobs, and get ready for and go to job interviews. Once you have a job, employment staff help you learn what you need to know to do your job, how when your job changes, and help you understand how to fit in with other employees at work. Your employment staff will come and help you at work more often or less often depending on what you need. Employment service choices include:

- **Pathway to Employment** is a person-centered service that works with you to identify your job interests and goals, gives you training on skills and information you need to know before you get a job, and helps you plan for getting a job in the community at or above minimum wage or for self-employment. You can choose Pathway to Employment if you are receiving day habilitation, pre-vocational or supported employment services, if you are a student leaving high school, or you are someone who is interested in getting and keeping a job.
- **Supported Employment (SEMP)** gives you the supports that you need to get and keep a paid job in the community. People with developmental disabilities often get supported employment after getting intensive supported employment services paid for by ACCES-VR (New York State Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation), or by Pathway to Employment or the Employment Training Program (ETP).
- **Employment Training Program (ETP)** gives you the chance to work in an internship that builds job experience in a community business. ETP can help students get work experience while in school, and can also help students get internships after high school that make it easier for you to get a paying job. In ETP you will learn what you need to know to keep a job, and you are paid at least minimum wage. ETP gives you job readiness classes that teach you how to act at and outside of your job. ETP also helps you find the right job for you, gives you job coaching to help you learn what you need to do your job, and works with you on other important job skills.
- **Community Prevocational Service** helps you get ready to work by helping you learn the skills you need to do well at work. Staff work with you to build on your strong points and to learn good work skills like finishing tasks, solving problems, and following directions. Staff will also help you learn good work habits, like how to act at your job, how to act with the people you work with, how to use tools you need for your job, and how to stay safe. You may also learn how to get around in your community and how to go places with less help.

Supports and Services for Being Active in Your Community

OPWDD provides supports that help you learn what you need to know to be more independent and to be a more active member of your community. These supports can help you learn how to get along with other people, how to act in different situations, how to be a self-advocate, how to find ways to get places in the community and how to go places with less help. Staff can help you take part in activities you are interested in like volunteering and enjoy your free time doing activities you choose, like sports and hobbies. OPWDD wants to help you be an active and independent member of your community.

- **Community Habilitation (CH)** is a service provided at home and in the community to help you learn and keep skills, meet people and make friends, take part in community activities, and be part of your community. CH provides hourly paid staff who help you learn how to live safely and independently at home and in the community. CH can be either self-directed or agency-sponsored.

- Assistive Technology-Adaptive Devices (AT) is a service that pays for tools that help people live as independently as possible and the repeating cost you need to pay so you can use those tools.
- **Day Habilitation (Day Hab)** is a service provided in the community (day hab without walls) or in certified sites in the community by staff who help you learn and keep skills, take part in community activities, meet people and make friends and be part of the community. Day hab staff help you learn how to be more independent and safe in the community.

For more information on supports and services for people with developmental disabilities

- E-mail student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov or
- Call OPWDD's information line at (866) 946-9733 or TTY: (866) 933-4889 to get connected with your local OPWDD Transition Coordinator, or
- **Call the Regional Office nearest you:**

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Queens: 718-217-4242

Staten Island: 718-983-5200

Region 5

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11/18/14



Transition Planning

Supports at Home and Housing Assistance

A Guide for Students in Transition

Information Line: (866) 946-9733 • www.opwdd.ny.gov

Supports Where You Live and Assistance with Housing Costs

OPWDD supports people with developmental disabilities, including students who are transitioning from school to adult life, to live in the community with the services they need to be as independent as possible, including:

- **Living at Home with Family or Living Independently:** OPWDD provides staff supports and other supports services to help an individual live successfully in his/her family home, with people he/she chooses, or in the individual's own home.
- **Shared Living Arrangements (Live-in Caregiver):** OPWDD supports self directing individuals to live independently and to choose a live-in companion who:
 - provides fellowship (engaging the person in activities, such as conversation, reading, games, crafts or accompanying the person on walks, on errands, to appointments, or to social events), and
 - protection (being with the person in his/her home, or accompanying the person outside the home to assure the person's safety and well-being), and
 - is paid an hourly wage if providing habilitation supports.
- **Paid Neighbor:** OPWDD supports self directing individuals to live independently by providing the opportunity for them to identify a paid neighbor who is "on-call" to assist them if needed with specifically defined duties and, if called, is paid an hourly wage for the delivery of self-hired community habilitation.
- **Family Care:** OPWDD supports individual to live in private, certified homes in which families provide support, guidance and companionship.
- **Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs):** OPWDD supports individuals to live in certified homes in the community that are operated by a not-for-profit service provider. IRAs are shared by a small number of individuals with developmental disabilities and provide staff support on-site according to the residents' needs.
- **Environmental Modifications (e-mods)** are physical changes to the person's home that allow an individual to get in and out of, move around in and live safely in their home.

OPWDD supports people with developmental disabilities, including students who are transitioning from school to adult life, to live as independently in the community as possible by providing assistance with housing costs. This assistance (housing subsidy) is calculated based on a number of factors including the county the individual lives in, the number of people living in the home and the number of bedrooms in the home. The individual is expected to contribute 30% of his/her countable income to housing costs. The individual may choose to live in:

- **Market Rate Home/Apartment:** The individual may use his/her housing subsidy toward a market rate home or apartment of his/her choice.
- **Subsidized Apartments:** The individual may obtain limited housing support to use toward a subsidized apartment (established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), cost and availability vary across NYS). Housing support to individuals receiving a Section 8 subsidy is limited to \$50 month, which is the difference between OPWDD's calculation and the Section 8 calculation.
- **Public Housing:** The individual may obtain a housing subsidy or supplementary housing support to live in public housing that provides affordable rental housing opportunities for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and individuals with all types of disabilities.
- **Customized Residential Options:** OPWDD supports individuals to live in a noncertified, single family home owned by a non-profit organization and rented to individuals with a developmental disability. Each tenant has his or her own lease and tenants work together to establish rules of the house.
- **Home Ownership:** OPWDD's Home of Your Own (HOYO) Program allows income-eligible, first-time homebuyers who have an intellectual or developmental disability (ID/DD) and their qualifying parents or legal guardians to purchase their own home. The individual may receive a housing subsidy calculated as described above to apply toward his/her housing expenses.

To learn more about the Home of Your Own program or to request housing counseling, contact OPWDD's Office of Home and Community Living: (518) 473-1973, housing.initiatives@opwdd.ny.gov.

For more information on community based services available to individuals with developmental disabilities:

- E-mail student.transition@opwdd.ny.gov or
- Contact OPWDD's information line at (866) 946-9733 or TTY: (866) 933-4889 to get connected with your local OPWDD Transition Coordinator, or
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