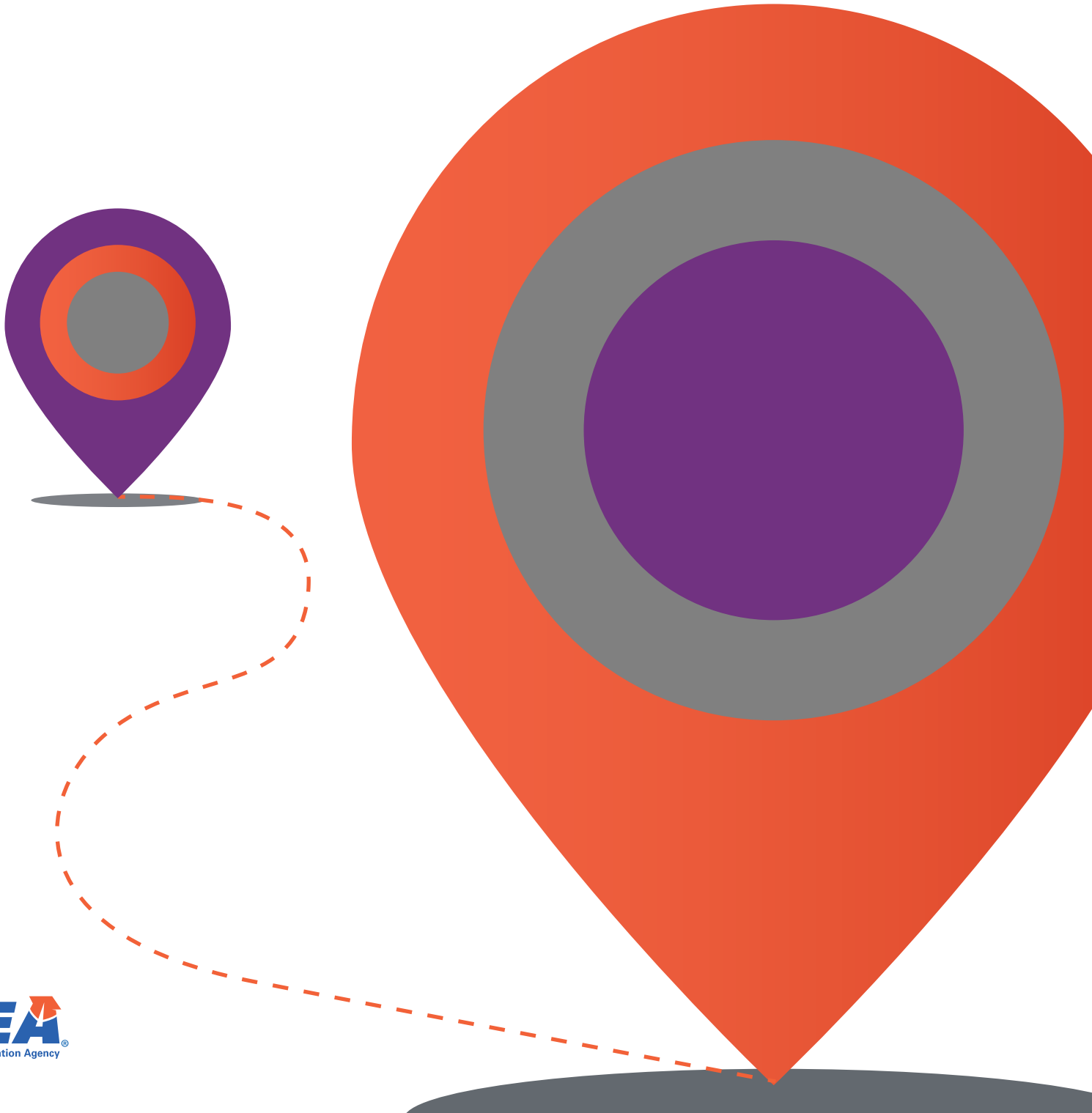
TEXAS TRANSITION
Student-Centered Transitions Network

# Pathways

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



TEA
Texas Education Agency

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# Texas Transition & Employment Guide for Students with Disabilities




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TEXAS TRANSITION
Student-Centered Transitions Network



# 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 to 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

**Next steps**
Activities to plan for your future

**Assistance**
Agencies & Contacts

## Additional resources:

***I'm a family member, supporter, or professional:***

**Texas Transition**
texastransition.org

**Transition & Employment Guide Toolkit**
texastransition.org/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:***

**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

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 Individualized Education Program (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 participate in 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. Some of these terms must be in your IEP by age 16, others by age 14. Many schools include all transition planning elements in every student's IEP by age 14.

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?

***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, or independent living as related to your adult life.

## Postsecondary Goals (included no later than by age 16)

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 need support in your home or community).

These goals are based on transition assessments. See the Table of Contents on page 1 for more information about each of these areas.

## Annual IEP Goals (included no later than by age 16)

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 of your postsecondary goals.

## Transition Services (included no later than by age 16)

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

The **course of study** lists 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 course of study in your IEP.

The **coordinated set of activities** describe 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 support will be needed to help you develop 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 9.

## 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 the support you will need after you graduate. Some agencies can even provide services during high school. See "***Assistance***" on page 43 to get an idea of some of the agencies available to support adults 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 9.

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



Hi, I'm Kendra. I graduated from high school 3 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 and what skills you have.
- ☐ 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.

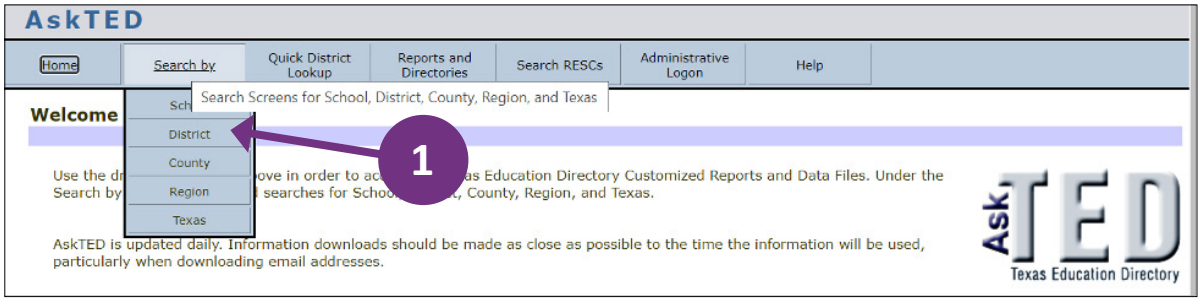
If you have questions about your transition plan or want help finding resources, contact the TED in your school district.

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

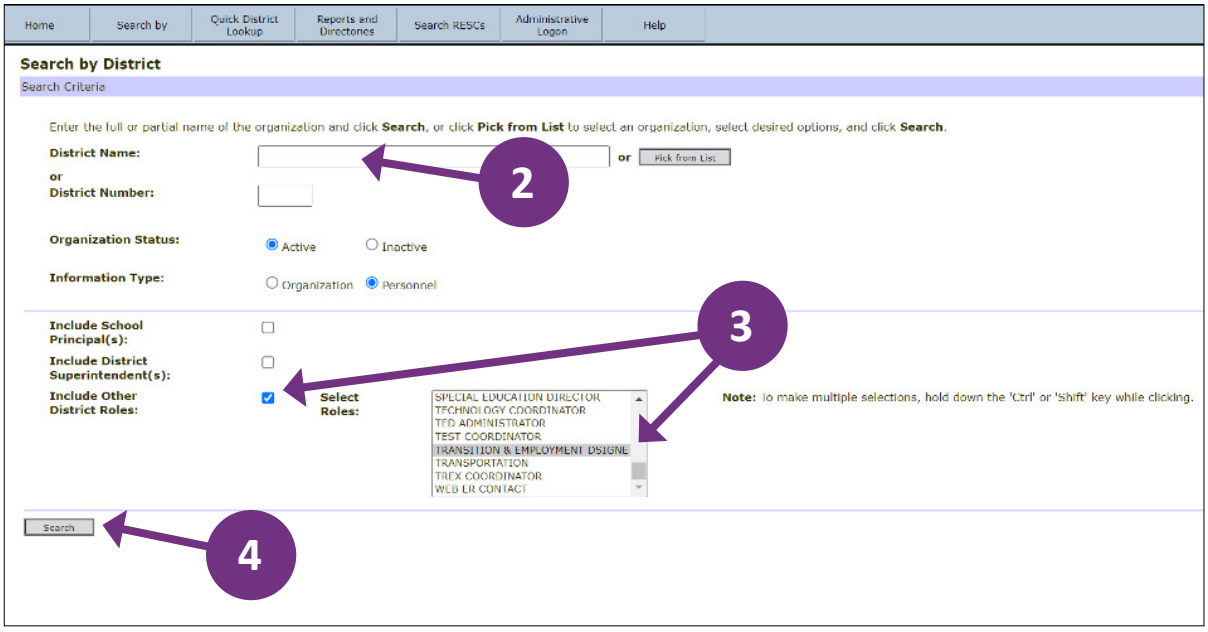
## How to find the TED in AskTED

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**




TED: Transition & Employment Services Designee

AskTED: Texas Education Directory
https://tea4avholly.tea.state.tx.us/Tea.AskTed.Web/Forms/Home.aspx
Scan the QR code for quick access

## Questions to ask your ARD committee

*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. See the "**Spotlight on Supports**" on page 6 to learn more about the TED role.*

Where can I find transition planning in my IEP?

What supports do I receive now that may be needed 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 I will need in adulthood?

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

Am I eligible to continue receiving special education services after I finish my high school classes and assessments?

*Use this space to write other questions you want to ask your teachers or your ARD committee.*

# 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*

## 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 Rights about
- guardianship,
- alternatives to guardianship, including SDMA, and
- other supports to allow you to live independently as an adult.

Your 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 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 independent in school or 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. 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 want to ask your teachers or your ARD committee.*

# 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,
- Requires postsecondary education such as a degree or certification (see "***College***" on page 19), 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 without completing all the tasks for that role

## 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 integrated into 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.

***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***" section starting on page 28 for more information about Work Incentive Programs.

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
  - Endorsements are a related series of courses that are grouped by interest or skillset.
  - There are 5 endorsements available: STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics); business and industry; arts and humanities; public services; and multidisciplinary studies.
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes offered on your high school campus
- Other courses that can help you prepare for employment
- Career assessments to discover your interests and strength 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 environment where the activity occurs. Your ARD committee will decide if an FVEis 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, Voc Rehab, VR, Texas Workforce, and even 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.

***There are other VR services 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 17 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 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. 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 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?

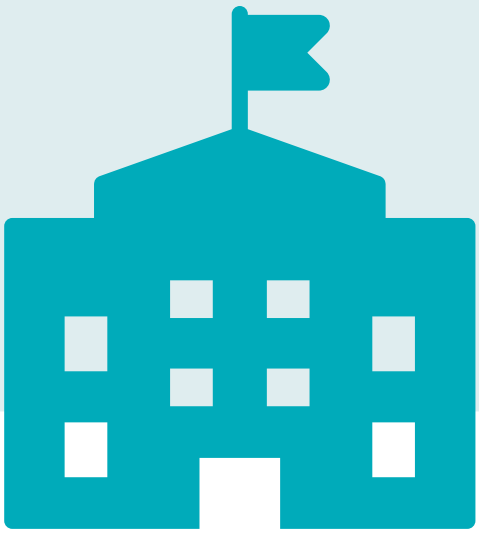
How is eligibility determined to receive VR services (now or as an adult)?

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?

# 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 4 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 1 or 2 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

## 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 to be able to do? Who already has those skills and can teach you?

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 23 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 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 need. 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 ok 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 admissions 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 organizations.
- ☐ 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. Look in your Summary of Performance (SOP) or find the Full and Individual Evaluation (FIE) in your IEP. Be prepared to talk about what worked during high school to be successful in your classes.

*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. 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 admissions 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?

*Use this space to write other questions you want to ask your teachers or your ARD committee.*

# 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

- ☐ *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***" section on page 28 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 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 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 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 independent.
- [ ] 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. 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 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 want to ask your teachers or your ARD committee.*

# 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 independently 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 list 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 list.

- 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 14 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 opportunities to pay for college. See the questions to ask your high school counselor on page 23 about applying for 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 intellectual disabilities, 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 list for Medicaid waivers as soon as she got her first diagnosis. We finally added her name to the list 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 graduated. 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 for personal care attendants. It was hard to find someone who already knew tactile sign language, so we talked with her VI teacher and speech therapist 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 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. You can think of the LIDDA as a one-stop-shop for medical, social, educational, and other supports that will help with the quality of life and community participation. 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 maintain independence

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 Health and Human Services (HHS) website: hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/find-us/where-can-i-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. 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 family or individual 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?

# 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***" section on page 28 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.

☐ *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 8, 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 head 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 name, insurance, and emergency contact in a place you can find it easily, such as a smartphone app.
- ☐ Know where your medical and health records are kept. 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 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
- » Referral to specialists
- » Transportation to doctor's appointments
- » Referral 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 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 works for children with disabilities in families that make too much money 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 Transition & Employment Services Designee for your district. 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

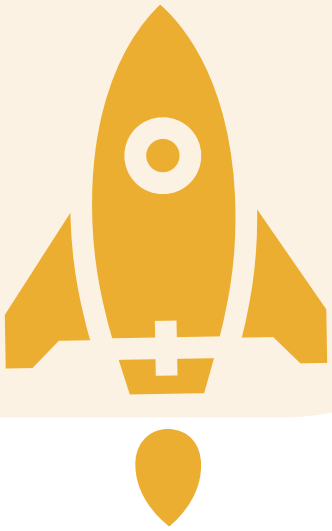
When will I have to move to another doctor as an adult patient?

Would you recommend any doctors for me to see when I'm an adult?

What would a new doctor need to know about me?

*Use this space to write other questions you want to ask your teachers or your ARD committee.*

# Next Steps



## Next steps: How to plan for your future

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 below. There are **skills** (things to *learn*) and **activities** (things to *do*). **Start with the list for your current age.** Check off items that you already did (*completed*), are starting now (*in process*), or do not apply to you (*not needed*).

Work backward to see if there are items you missed when you were younger. Then, look ahead to see what will be next.

Review all the "in-process" items to begin making your own list of what you need to *learn* or *do*. See "***Assistance***" starting on page 43 to find roles and agencies who can help you.

Take a deep breath and remember that you can work on this over time. Many students and families worry about life after high school. Take it one step at a time.

Use your list to have conversations with your ARD committee and other people who can support you in planning for the transition to adulthood. This is your life and your list! Your family or your teachers can support you in completing the items on your list. Find ways to increase your independence as you get closer to adulthood.

### Early Childhood: Birth to Age 3 and/or Age 3 to 5

Skills (supported by family)

| Completed | In Process | Not Needed | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Begin building skills for self-determination: make choices, solve problems during play, regulate emotions. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Hold high expectations for your child. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Promote awareness of strengths and interests by reflecting on what your child enjoys doing during play. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Find opportunities for your child to make choices about spending or saving money, such as a piggy bank. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Include your child in chores, even if they can only complete part of a task or participate with support. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Talk about the jobs in your family. Explain what each person does at their job. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Develop awareness of careers by learning about community helpers. |

| Completed | In Process | Not Needed | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Activities (completed by family)** |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Put your child's name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Contact 2-1-1 to find out what is available in your community. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Provide opportunities for independence. Think about what you are doing for your child that you wish they could do for themselves. Partner with your child's Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teacher and/or therapists to develop those skills. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Collaborate with your child's teacher to develop the IEP. Communicate your child's strengths and interests. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Ask about eligibility for special education services in the school setting based on diagnosis. Plan for the transition to elementary school with your child's ARD committee. |

## Elementary: Age 6-10

### Skills (student-led, as appropriate)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Develop skills for self-determination: identify strengths, struggles, and learning style. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Learn the purpose and contents of your IEP. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Develop skills for money management, such as budgeting an allowance. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Learn about the rights and responsibilities of students 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. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Practice working cooperatively through sports or other recreational activities. |

### Activities (student-led, as appropriate)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Attend ARD meetings: introduce ARD members, make choices 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). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | If possible, visit your family's workplaces to see what they do on the job. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | If you have autism, participate in the ARD committee discussion about futures planning and consider the link to transition planning. |

## Middle School/Junior High: Age 11-14

### Skills (student-led, with support as needed)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Expand skills for self-determination at home and school: describe your strengths, struggles, and learning style. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Increase self-awareness through participation in transition assessments (by age 14). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Practice using a budget to plan for spending, saving, and sharing. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Take more responsibility for things like schoolwork, keeping belongings organized, and your daily schedule. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Continue telling 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. |

| Completed | In Process | Not Needed | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 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. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Learn what to do in an emergency. |

### Activities (student-led, with support as needed)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Participate in ARD meetings. Make introductions, share what works best for you in your classes. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Begin transition planning in the IEP by age 14 or younger if appropriate. This planning includes considering self-determination skills and any supports and services you might need to develop skills for independence in adulthood. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 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). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Explore high school graduation pathways and learn about Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes available at middle and high school. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Complete a Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) with your school counselor or ARD committee during 8th or 9th grade. 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. Your school may be able to help with this. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Ask your doctor if and at what age they no longer provide care for young adults. |

## High School: Age 14-18

### Skills (student-led, with support as needed)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Practice and enhance skills for self-determination in classes, jobs, and community: decision-making; problem-solving; goal-setting; self-regulation; self-advocacy. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Practice talking about your disability with trusted teachers. Describe the support you need to be independent or to be successful in class. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Practice describing any health conditions, allergies, or medications. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Learn about money management, including credit cards and banking fees. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 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 more of your schedule and activities. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Consider leadership opportunities, such as mentoring younger students or joining advocacy groups. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Participate in CTE classes and other work-based learning opportunities that match your career goals. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Practice filling out job applications and going through the interview process. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 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). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Explore options for postsecondary education with your ARD committee or school counselor. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Participate in travel training, if needed to learn ways to navigate your community independently. Travel training might be available through your school. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Manage your health care, including prescriptions, or find the right supports to help you keep track of any medical needs. |

| Completed | In Process | Not Needed | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Participate in transition planning, including assessments to determine your strengths, preferences, interests, and needs. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Request a functional vocational evaluation (FVE) if career and other transition assessments were ineffective in developing your employment goals and activities. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Lead ARD meetings by sharing information about your strengths, interests, goals, and disability-related needs. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Discuss with your family if you want your school to share information about you with agencies or invite representatives from agencies to your ARD meeting. Ask what information will be shared and why it is being requested. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Ask your ARD committee or school counselor about graduation options such as endorsements. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Choose a career to pursue. You can change your career goals as your interests change. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Pursue a graduation plan that will allow you to meet your postsecondary goals. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Find out if you will be eligible to receive special education services after meeting graduation requirements. These are often called 18+ services. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Before you graduate, develop your Summary of Performance (SOP) with your teachers. Practice sharing it during your ARD meeting or in meetings with agencies. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | By age 17, review the information your school shares about the transfer of rights at age 18. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Before your 18th birthday, decide if any support to make legal and other decisions will be needed, including alternatives to guardianship such as SDMA. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 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 (there are limited exemptions for men who meet the criteria for some medical conditions). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 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). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Contact agencies that can provide needed services in adulthood to learn about eligibility and the application process. See "***Assistance***" on page 43 for possible agencies. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Update your PGP each year to show the classes you took and any changes to courses you want to take. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Get job experience through school, weekend/summer jobs, or volunteer opportunities. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Develop a traditional resume, or you can use photos or videos of you performing job tasks to show your skills. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Ask your Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (TVRC) or your ARD committee about Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) opportunities available through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | If you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), ask your TVRC about work incentive programs to ensure you keep benefits while earning income. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Keep a list of extracurricular activities. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Research entrance requirements and cost for any postsecondary education programs you want to pursue. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | 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. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Request needed accommodations on college entrance exams. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Contact the Disability Services office at colleges of interest to find out about supports they offer. |

## Activities (student-led, with support as needed)

| Completed | In Process | Not Needed | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Explore options for living in your community, such as owning, renting, co-housing, dorms, and other residential options. Identify any supports you will need to live independently. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Explore transportation options in your community (driver's license, bus, taxi, other). Work with your ARD committee to identify supports that can help you access transportation. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Consider building a network of support if your disability will affect your independence. Reach out to people in your life who might want to support you in meeting your goals. Ask your school if Person-Centered Planning is available to help you begin establishing a network. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | If you consider supports such as day habilitation, visit some adult programs to see if they match your goals and interests. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Talk with your doctor and insurance company or benefits provider about what will change when you are an adult. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Find a doctor to replace your pediatric doctor. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Create a medical summary to use during doctor visits. |

## After You Graduate from High School: 18-22

### Skills (adult-led, with support as needed)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Use your SOP to describe your strengths, your needs, and to explain the supports that work for you. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | If you are eligible to continue receiving special education services after meeting graduation requirements, participate in community-based services to develop your adult schedule (often referred to as 18+ programs). These services will not be available beyond the school year in which you turn 22. Ask your ARD committee about how these services will differ from what your school day looked like in high school. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Use skills for self-determination in all areas of your life. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Use skills for self-advocacy to 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 disability expenses. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Use skills for employment to solve problems and advance in your career. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Use transportation options in your community, managing any needed supports. |

### Activities (adult-led, with support as needed)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | If you are still 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). |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Apply for SSI at 18 based on your income, not your family's income. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Request accommodations on the job site, as needed. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Request accommodations and work with the disability services office at college to receive needed supports. |
| | | | When you reach age 18, unless guardianship is assigned, you will: |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Decide whether you want your information to be shared with agencies. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Make decisions in your ARD meeting. |
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Determine who can see your information for bank accounts, credit cards, medical records, or report cards in college. |

## 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 issues that arise related to your disability.

### Concerns about disability discrimination

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

Disability Rights Texas
drtx.org

### Concerns about 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

### Concerns about accommodations in higher education

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

### Job loss

Contact your local 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

### Concerns about finance or housing

Your Texas Benefits
yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn

Aunt Bertha
company.auntbertha.com
findhelp.org

### Concerns about your safety

Department of Family and Protective Services: Adult Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation
dfps.state.tx.us/Everyones_Business

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.

# Assistance



## Who can help?

Who can help? The following few pages can help you find agencies, websites, and other resources to support your transition planning.

Let's start with some good places to find information about all areas of transition planning:

**2-1-1 Texas**
Helps Texas citizens connect with the services they need.
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

**AskTED**
The online Texas Education Directory. See page 7 to learn how to use AskTED.
This directory can help you find who to contact in your district or charter school for roles such as:
- Transition and Employment Services Designee
- Special Education Director
- Foster Care Liaison
- Homeless Liaison

**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-center/contact-adrc-staff

**Partners Resource Network**
Parent Training and Information Centers
409-898-4684 1-800-866-4726 prntexas.org partnersresource@sbcglobal.net

**Texas Transition**
Student-Centered Transitions Network (SCTN) in collaboration with the Texas Education Agency (TEA).
texastransition.org

Use the list on the following pages to find services to help you meet your goals or to find more information about each topic: Transition in the IEP, Legal Rights, Career, College, Community, Financial, Health.

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

## Transition Planning in the IEP

*Local* .....

Find the **Transition & Employment Services Designee (TED)** for your district or charter school

Contact the **SCTN consultant** at your Education Service Center (ESC). There are 20 ESCs across Texas. You can find who to contact on the Texas Transition website.

*Texas*.....

**The Legal Framework** for the Child-Centered Special Education Process
Statewide leadership project partnering the Texas Education Agency and Region 18 Education Service Center. The website is a compilation of state and federal requirements for special education organized by topic in a user-friendly format.
432-561-IDEA | framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW-Landingpage
frameworkhelp@esc18.net

**SpedTex**
Special Education Information Center
1-855-773-3839 | spedtex.org | inquire@spedtex.org

**The Texas Education Agency (TEA) Secondary Transition Guidance**
The state agency oversees primary and secondary public education.
512-463-9414 | https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/programs-and-services/state-guidance/secondary-transition-guidance | sped@tea.texas.gov

*National* .....

**National Technical Assistance Center for Transition - The Collaborative (NTACT: C)**
Technical Assistance Center co-funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).
transitionta.org

**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)**
Supports programs that help educate children and youth with disabilities and provides for the rehabilitation of youth and adults with disabilities. OSERS provides a wide array of supports to parents and individuals, school districts, and states in two main areas—special education and vocational rehabilitation—through its two main components:
- OSEP: Office of Special Education Programs
- RSA: Rehabilitation Services Administration

www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers

**Self-Determination** at Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities
785-864-7600 | selfdetermination.ku.edu | selfdetermination@ku.edu

## Legal Rights

*Local* .....

Find the **Special Education Director** for your district or charter school

*Texas*.....

**Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)**
Works with communities to promote safe and healthy families and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
dfps.state.tx.us/I_Am/disabilities.asp

**Disability Rights of Texas (DRTX)**
The federally designated legal protection and advocacy agency for people with disabilities in Texas that helps people with disabilities understand and exercise their rights under the law, ensuring their full and equal participation in society.
Statewide Intake Line for New Clients: 1-800-252-9108
Online Intake Available 24/7 at: intake.DRTx.org | Headquarters: 512-454-4816 | www.DRTX.org

**Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities**
Works 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

**Institute for Person-Centered Practices**
Framework to assist people with disabilities to have positive control over their lives and environment in which they live.
512-232-0740 | Persons using a TTY/TDD: Relay Texas at 800-735-2989 or 711 (voice)
Individuals with speech disabilities: Speak-Up Texas at 1-8-SPEAK-UP-TX
disabilitystudies.utexas.edu/ipcp

**Legal Hotline for Texans**
Website dedicated to providing free and reliable legal information to low-income Texans.
texaslawhelp.org

**Texas Advocates**
The leader in self-advocacy in Texas
www.texadvocates.org

*National* .....

**411 on Disability Disclosure** from The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth)
Workbook about disability disclosure to help youth make informed decisions about whether or not to disclose their disability and understand by considering how that decision may impact their education, employment, and social lives.
877-871-0744 (Toll Free) | TTY: 877-871-0665 (Toll Free)
http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/the-411-on-disability-disclosure-a-workbook-for-youth-with-disabilities/

**Office of Civil Rights (OCR)**
Protects your fundamental rights of nondiscrimination, conscience, religious freedom, and health information privacy. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
800-368-1019 | TDD: 800-537-7697 (Toll Free)
https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/disability/index.html | OCRMail@hhs.gov

**Selective Service**
Under the Military Selective Service Act, each man must register at age 18 and then let Selective Service know within 10 days of any changes in the information he provided on his registration form until he turns 26 years old.
888-655-1825 (Toll Free) | sss.gov/register/who-needs-to-register/#p4

**Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)**
Serves Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries with disabilities who want to work by helping to remove barriers to employment.
ssa.gov/work/protectionadvocacy.html?tl=1

## Career

*Local* .....

Find the **Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (TVRC)** assigned to your campus. Ask the TED for your district for help to find the person in this role.

Find the **Student HireAbility Navigator** for your area.
StudentNavigators@twc.state.tx.us

Ask your **school counselor** or **Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers** on your campus about work-based learning opportunities available during high school.

*Texas*.....

**CTE Resource Center**
A one-stop-shop for CTE professional development, instructional materials, and program information.
txcte.org

**Employment Guide for People with Disabilities** from Health and Human Services (HHS)
hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/employment/employment-first/employment-guide-people-disabilities

**Answering the Big Question: If I Go to Work, Will I Lose My Medicaid or Medicare?**
https://tcdd.texas.gov/resources/employment-resources/

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

**Texas Workforce Solutions**
Texas Workforce Solutions provide workforce development services that help workers find and keep good jobs and help employers hire the skilled workers they need to grow their businesses.
Directory of Workforce Solutions Offices & Services
twc.texas.gov/directory-workforce-solutions-offices-services

**Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS)**
Serves youth and students with disabilities to help prepare for postsecondary education and employment opportunities. Services are eligibility and need-based.
800-628-5115 | twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-youth-students

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** from Texas Workforce Solutions
Offers job seekers immediate and continuous access to job matching services. Browse thousands of job postings, including all Texas state agency jobs, refer to open positions, complete resumés and/or state applications, and maintain them online.
workintexas.com/vosnet/dashboards/default.aspx?menuid=MENU_START_PAGE_DASHBOARD

*National* .....

**Career One Stop**
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/ResourcesFor/WorkersWithDisabilities/vocational-rehabilitation.aspx
info@careeronestop.org

**Job Accommodations Network (JAN)**
Free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues.
askjan.org

**Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)**
An agency within the U.S. Department of Labor that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities.
dol.gov/agencies/odep

**Rehabilitation Services Administration**
Provides leadership and resources to assist state and other agencies in providing vocational rehabilitation and other services to individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment, independence, and integration into the community and the competitive labor market.
rsa.ed.gov

**Ticket to Work at Social Security Administration (SSA)**
choosework.ssa.gov

## College

*Local* .....

Find the **College/Career Counselor** assigned to your campus by visiting the counseling center at your school.

*Texas*.....

**Apply Texas**
A centralized means for Texas and non-Texas students to apply to the many outstanding postsecondary institutions available in Texas.
applytexas.org/adappc/gen/c_start.WBX

**College for All Texans**
One-stop source of information to help students and parents plan, apply, and pay for college in Texas.
www.collegeforalltexans.com

**Own Your Own Future**
Information that will help you plan ahead for college.
ownyourownfuture.com

**Texas Reality Check**
Developed by the Labor Market & Career Information Department of the Texas Workforce Commission, this website shows you how much your living expenses will cost and the amount of money you will need to earn to pay for them.
texasrealitycheck.com

**Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD)**

**The Next Step** video and discussion guide
https://tcdd.texas.gov/publications/the-next-step-video-and-discussion-guide/

**Higher Education Resource Guide**
tcdd.texas.gov/higher-education-resource-guide

**Texas OnCourse**
A state-funded initiative to improve college and career readiness for all Texas students.
texasoncourse.org

**Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)**
Provides leadership and coordination for Texas higher education.
highered.texas.gov

**Postsecondary Programs and Services for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**
highered.texas.gov/apps/idd

*National* .....

**Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)**
Professional membership association for individuals committed to equity for persons with disabilities in higher education.
ahead.org/home

**Federal Student Aid**
U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid provides more than $120 billion in financial aid to help pay for college or career school each year.
studentaid.gov

Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC)
1-800-433-3243

**Think College**
National organization dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disability.
thinkcollege.net

## Community

*Local* .....

Find the nearest **Center for Independent Living (CIL)**
ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory-results/TX

Find the nearest office for your **local authority** to learn about programs and services available to support independent living.
hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/find-us/where-can-i-find-services

**Local intellectual and developmental disability authority (LIDDA)**
apps.hhs.texas.gov/contact/la.cfm

**Local mental/behavioral health authority (LMHA/LBHA)**
hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/mental-health-substance-use-resources/find-your-local-mental-health-or-behavioral-health-authority

*Texas*.....

**Directory of Community Resources for People with Disabilities**
Project of the Center on Disability and Development (CDD) at Texas A&M University. The DCR aims to connect individuals with disabilities with organizations and agencies in Texas that provide disability-specific resources and services.
dcr.tamu.edu

**Easterseals**
Easterseals offers home and community based services and supports that are categorized into five distinct support 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**
Includes a list of available services and CIL offices throughout Texas.
hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/independent-living-services

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

**The Arc of Texas**
Promotes, protects, and advocates for the human rights and self-determination of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Phone: 512-454-6694
thearcoftexas.org | info@thearcoftexas.org

## Financial

*Local* .....

Find 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 who have a disability to help them make informed choices about work.

Contact the Ticket to Work helpline for help with locating providers.
866-968-7842 | TTY: 866-833-2967
choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp/result?p_sort=distance&option=2&resStr=en,wf&zipcode=78723&name=WIPA&p_pagesize=25&p_pagenum=1

*Texas*.....

**Medicaid Waiver Programs**
Overview of services and eligibility, contact information, and a link to the HHSC website.
txhealthsteps.com/static/courses/waivers/sections/section-1-4.html

**Texas ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience)**
Assists individuals with disabilities and their families in saving funds to pay for many disability-related expenses critical to maintaining the individuals' health, independence, and quality of life.
texasable.org

*National* .....

**ABLE National Resource Center**
Connecting people with disabilities, their families, and those who support them to information about the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act and ABLE Accounts.
ablenrc.org

**Benefits Eligibility Screening Tool**
Online resource to help you find Social Security benefits administered by the U.S. Social Security Administration.
ssabest.benefits.gov

**Special Needs Alliance**
Attorneys for special needs planning.
specialneedsalliance.org

**Social Security Administration (SSA)**
Retirement, disability, and survivor's benefits.
ssa.gov

**SSA Ticket to Work**
Supports career development 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

**The Arc Center for Future Planning**
Supporting and encouraging families of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities to plan for the future.
futureplanning.thearc.org

## Health

*Local* .....

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

*Texas*.....

**Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN)**
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 | hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/children-special-health-care-needs-program
cshcn@hhsc.state.tx.us

**Department of State Health Services (DSHS)**
Promotes and protects the health of people, and the communities where they live, learn, work, worship, and play.
888-963-7111 | dshs.texas.gov

**Disability Programs (HHS)**
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

**Medicaid**
hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip

**Texas Department of Insurance**
Learn about insurance, check rates, and get help with your questions and complaints.
800-252-3439 | tdi.texas.gov

**Your Texas Benefits**
Apply for and manage benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid, CHIP, and TAN-F cash help.
yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home

*National* .....

**Got Transition**
Federally funded national resource center on health care transition.
gottransition.org

**Medicaid**
Federal health coverage programs administered by each state.
medicaid.gov

## Focus on Family and Supporters

**Navigate Life Texas**
The Navigate Life Texas (NLT) website, a project supported by the Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), was created to inform and empower parents of children with disabilities or special health care needs.
navigatelifetexas.org/en/transition-to-adulthood

**Parent Companion**
A guide for Texas parents and caregivers of children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities from birth through 5 years of age.
parentcompanion.org

**PACER Center**
Parent training and information center for families of children and youth with all disabilities from birth to young adults.
pacer.org/students/transition-to-life

**Partners Resource Network**
Parent Training and Information Centers.
409-898-4684 | 1-800-866-4726 (Toll Free) | prntexas.org | partnersresource@sbcglobal.net

**Special Needs Parent Toolkit for Military Families**
militaryonesource.mil/products/special-needs-parent-toolkit-downloadable-146

**Texas Parent to Parent**
TxP2P empowers families to be strong advocates through parent-to-parent support, resource referral, and education.
txp2p.org

**Texas Project First**
A project of the Family-to-Family Network committed to providing accurate and consistent information to parents and families of students with disabilities.
texasprojectfirst.org

## Special Circumstances

*Foster Care* .....

Find the **Foster Care Liaison for your district or charter school**
tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/Searching_for_foster_care_liaison_information_in_AskTED.pdf

**Foster Care Transition Guide (available through TEA)**
https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/foster-care-and-student-success/foster-care-student-success

**Transitional Living Services programs (available through DFPS)**
These programs provide a systemic, integrated approach in transition planning and the provision of transitional services and benefits that affect both older youth in foster care and those who have aged out.
dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/default.asp

*Disability-specific Resources* .....

**Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI)**
512-454-8631 | tsbvi.edu

**Texas School for the Deaf (TSD)**
512-462-5353 | tsd.state.tx.us

**National Deaf Center**
nationaldeafcenter.org

*Dropout Prevention* .....

**Communities in Schools**
tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/support-for-at-risk-schools-and-students/communities-in-schools




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TEXAS TRANSITION
Student-Centered Transitions Network

