

# Roadmap to a Career

## Accessing Employment Funding and Supports

The Future Begins Today

4/22/25

## Division of Rehabilitation Services

DRS collaborates with many local high schools to provide STEP and other transition services

- availability can vary by district and region
- for students whose schools do not offer STEP, or for those seeking additional support, there are several ways to connect directly with DRS

Check with your Transition personnel to verify:

- vocational services available while in school
- connection to Adult Services through DRS VR

## Division of Rehabilitation Services

**For those without STEP or those who have aged out of Transition....**

### **Online Application**

Individuals with disabilities can apply for services by completing the online referral form on the Illinois DHS website.

- After submission, a DRS counselor will contact the applicant to discuss goals, the nature of the disability, and the services DRS can provide.

### **Local DRS Offices**

Individuals with disabilities and families can locate and contact their nearest DRS office using the DHS Office Locator.

- Local offices can provide information on available services and assist with the application process.

## Division of Rehabilitation Services

**For those without STEP or those who have aged out of Transition...**

**Internet Referrals: [Apply Online](#)**

*For Transition aged youth, only use if the school is not making a DRS VR connection*

**Finding a local DRS Office: [IDHS Office Locator](#)**

Select Office Type: Rehabilitation Services

Through DRS VR connection, students can access services such as vocational counseling, job placement assistance, and other supports aimed at facilitating a successful transition from school to employment.

# Transition Services

## Transition Services

### **Effective Practices**

- Person-centered
- Timely
- Collaborative
- Focused on real-world outcomes

## Transition Services

### **Person Centered**

- Focus on the student's strengths, preferences, interests
- Encourages student's voice and choice in shaping their future

Skill deficits are a component but cannot be the driving factor.

## Transition Services

### Timely

- Early and ongoing career exploration
- Job shadowing, career assessments, workplace visits.
- Helps students discover interests and realistic career paths early

The transition process begins at age 14½, is reviewed each year, and involves ongoing assessment, exploration, and real-life experiences to build a strong, individualized transition plan.

## Transition Services

### **Collaborative**

A coordinated effort includes:

- Student
- School
- Division of Rehabilitation Services, Vocational Rehabilitation (DRS VR)
- Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)
- Family
- Businesses

Clear roles, shared plans, and smooth handoffs.

## Transition Services

### **Real World Outcomes**

- Transportation
- Time Management
- Social Network
- Work experiences
- Job Placement
- Long term supports

Equipping transition students with the skills, experiences, and supports they need to move confidently into meaningful, Competitive Integrated Employment.

## Additional Connections

- Students exiting Transition may need the support of an Adult Service Provider
- Adult Service Providers who work with DRS VR are called Community Rehabilitation Partners (CRPs)
- The connection between school services and (Adult) CRPs typically begins in the last semester of Transition
- The CRP should utilize the Summary of Performance (SOP) and Career information from the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

## Summary of Performance

The Summary of Performance provides a clear record of a student's achievements and abilities.

Helps with:

- Post-secondary education (college)
- Vocational programs
- Employment services after high school
  
- Share with:
  - Colleges (Disability Coordinators)
  - Adult Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
  - Job Developers & Coaches

# Post-Transition Services

## Determining Eligibility for Supports Post Transition

### **Division of Rehabilitation Services – Adult Vocational Rehabilitation**

- Available to individuals whose disability / disabilities present a barrier to Competitive Integrated Employment
- Includes individuals with an IEP who are exiting Transition

### **Division of Developmental Disabilities**

- Available to individuals who have been selected from PUNS
- Includes residential, community day and employment supports

## Support Options through DRS VR and CRPs

Includes but is not limited to:

### **DRS VR Direct Service**

- DRS VR Counselor works with the person to find a job or post secondary education

### **DRS CRP Services**

- DRS VR Counselor refers the case to a local Community Rehabilitation Provider (Adult Service Provider) for job development, placement and time limited supports

## Support Options through DRS VR and CRPs

Individuals with the most significant barriers to Competitive Integrated Employment are typically referred to CRPs

This occurs after the person and the DRS VR Counselor develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

*The IPE and IEP are related but separate /distinct tools.*

- The DRS VR Counselor will inform the person of CRP options
- Final choice of CRP should be driven by the person
- Not all CRPs offer the same services

## Support Options through DRS VR and CRPs

### Typical services contracted through CRPs

- Milestone
- Supported Employment
- Customized Employment

Each program has the same intended outcome (obtain and sustain CIE) but varies in the scope, nature and duration of services.

The DRS VR Counselor will work with the individual, his or her support networks and or CRP to determine the best fit but maintains discretion over assignment.

## Support Options through DRS VR and CRPs

### **Milestone**

- A performance-based model where CRPs receive payments after achieving specific “milestones” in a person’s client’s employment journey.
- Milestones include 15, 45 and 90 days of employment
- Designed for individuals with some job experience who need short-term support to obtain Competitive Integrated Employment

## Support Options through DRS VR and CRPs

### **Supported Employment**

- Performance based model designed for individuals classified as “Most Significant” by DRS VR
- Ideal for those who will continue to need supports for 1-2 years after hire
- Includes job development, intensive job coaching, and supports after stabilization.
- Supports available through 8 Phases
- No longer than 24 months after placement

## Support Options through DRS VR and CRPs

### **Customized Employment**

- Designed for Individuals classified as “Most Significant” by DRS VR who would benefit from a role tailored for their unique contributions and skills
- Job placement into a negotiated role
  - Not applying for bagger / cart roles at grocers
- Includes Discovery phase, at outset, as an addition to the Supported Employment model
- Supports available through 9 Phases
- No longer than 24 months after placement

## Achieving Success in DRS VR - Case Closure

Once it has been determined that an individual has achieved their DRS VR employment goal, as defined in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), DRS VR services can end.

This is DRS VR Case Closure.

Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities may transition to long term individualized supports under the Division of Developmental Disabilities Supported Employment Program (DDD SEP).

## **Division of Developmental Disabilities – Supported Employment Program**

The Division of Developmental Disabilities administers a Supported Employment Program (DDD SEP), available to:

- recipients of the Adults with Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid Waiver
- residents of Illinois State Operated Developmental Centers (SODC)

DDD SEP provides funding for long term supports and services necessary to assist individuals with I/DD to maintain employment at competitive wages in a variety of integrated settings.

DDD SEP is designed to promote regular interaction with persons without disabilities who are not paid caregivers or service providers.

## **Division of Developmental Disabilities – Supported Employment Program**

DDD SEP services and supports are provided by Adult Service Providers

- Not all DRS VR CRPs offer DDD SEP
- Not all DDD SEP Providers are DRS VR CRPs

Understanding the services and supports available through Adult Service Providers is critical to planning a consistent journey.

Independent Service Coordination entities facilitate connections to DDD Adult Service Providers

DDD is an hourly service billed from the persons Waiver award.

Transition (Pre-Employment)

Adult DRS VR (Job Placement)

DDD SEP (Long-term Services)

# Dignity in Pay

## Dignity in Pay

Governor Pritzker signed the Dignity in Pay Act in January 2025

Phases out Subminimum Wage by 12/31/2029

Supports providers, who currently operate SMW programs, to transition

Emphasizes Illinois commitment to **Employment First**

- all Illinois citizens, regardless of disability, are capable of full participation and integration in their communities – including employment.

# Resources

## Resources

- [Illinois Center for Transition and Work – School to Work Transition Guide](#)
- [Division of Developmental Disabilities Employment Page](#)
- [Division of Rehabilitation Services – Online Referral](#)
- [Illinois Disability Benefits 101](#)
- [DDD DRS Memorandum of Understanding](#)

## Questions and Support

### **Casey B Burke**

Division of Developmental Disabilities  
Supported Employment Administrator

[casey.burke@illinois.gov](mailto:casey.burke@illinois.gov)

217-299-4935

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