

## Transition Information: Minnesota

### **Timeline**

- *By the age of 14:*
  - Transition planning should begin when the student is 14 years old or earlier. At this age, or when the student reaches 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the district and the county must establish a community transition interagency committee for youth with disabilities.
- *By the age of 16:*
  - The IEP should include the transition services that they will in the future need that were agreed upon in accordance with the student's needs and desires. It should include annual goals and long-term goals which the student hopes to attain over their period of transition.
- *Before the age of 17:*
  - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in Minnesota is 18)
    - Individuals should be notified of the transfer of rights well before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and should understand their rights.
    - If families and students feel uncomfortable with the transfer of the decision-making abilities to the student, the prospective guardian needs to petition for guardianship at the local probate court.
  - The vocational rehabilitation process should begin at least 2 years prior to high school graduation.
- *Before the age of 18:*
  - Apply for Social Security benefits, Social Security Disability Insurance and Medicaid.
    - If ineligible for Medicaid, look into other health insurance options, as it is likely the individual will no longer be covered by the parents plan after age 19 if not enrolled in college or covered by Medicaid.
  - Add your name to the waiting list for residential placements in the state. Regardless of future residential plans, it is good to be on the waitlist, as these lists can be extremely long, and it is easy to remove your name than it is to add it.
- *At age 18:*
  - Register to vote.
  - Upon an individual's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, he or she changes from a system of being entitled to certain rights and privileges to a system of eligibility.
  - Male students should register for the draft, no matter the level of functioning.
  - If applicable, individuals should apply to adult agencies for vocational and day programs, as well as for supported living.

## **Starting the Transition Process:**

Transition planning should begin when the student is 14 years old or earlier. At this age, or when the student reaches 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the district and the county must establish a community transition interagency committee for youth with disabilities. This should include teachers both from the special education and regular education fields, parents of youth with disabilities, and those who will be involved in giving the student services such as post-secondary institutions, rehabilitation counselors, medical professionals and others who provide transition services. This is the transition team that will be involved in formulating the student's IEP.

The IEP should include the transition services that they will in the future need that were agreed upon in accordance with the student's needs and desires. It should include annual goals and long-term goals which the student hopes to attain over their period of transition, preferably before they transition out of the special education program and leave school. This means that there should be annual IEP meetings which the student participates in and where goals will be adapted depending on the progress of the student and how many of their annual goals they have completed.

## **Education:**

In terms of graduation, the state sets their own minimum graduation requirements but LEAs can add to those requirements. The only diploma option is to try and get the standard high school diploma. There are no occupational diploma options or certificate of completion options. Any allowances must be addressed in the individual's IEP and must explain the reasons for those allowances. Minnesota does have a state exit exam required for students to be awarded a high school diploma and graduate. However, while every student takes the same test, there is a lower passing score for students with disabilities. If the student fails the exam, he or she has the option of retaking the same exam again or taking an alternate exam in a year. The state of Minnesota does state that if the student does complete secondary school and fulfill the goals of his or her IEP, he or she can be granted a diploma that is nearly identical to a standard high school diploma.

There are many colleges and universities in Minnesota that provide programs for students with developmental disabilities. However, they must take the required standardized tests and fill out the same applications for most two-year and four-year colleges. For example, there are numerous technical colleges for those who get a high school diploma, but that require a specific skill set depending on the school.

## **Guardianship/Conservatorship:**

The age of majority is 18 years old which indicates that at that age, the rights to make decisions about an individual's welfare transfer to the individual from the initial guardians who are usually his or her parents. Individuals should be notified of this transfer well before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and should understand their rights.

A parent or caregiver can petition for guardianship over the individual before the individual's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday by filing a petition at their local district court, if he or she feels that the individual is incapable of making decisions responsibly. During this process, the individual in question must be proven as incapacitated by professionals who present evidence to the court. The disability must make the individual incapable of making decisions about his or her health, finances and other aspects of life. However, if one is considering conservatorship, the individual must only be proven incapable of making decisions related to his or her property and money.

There are other options beyond full guardianship or conservatorship, such as emergency guardianship/conservatorship, public or private guardianship/conservatorship and other less restrictive alternatives. The emergency options should be used when the person is incapable of making their decisions and are in the midst of an emergency with no other guardian. This guardianship/conservatorship will only last for 60 days and courts will specify the terms of that agreement. The public guardianship is when a person from a local county agency or a state-approved organization becomes the individual's legal guardian. This is more of a delegation of power than the transfer of the person's rights. A private guardianship is more restrictive and is described as when the court appoints someone that is close to the disabled individual like a family member or close friend to be the individual's guardian. This is often more difficult since the judge has to determine if that person is capable of making decisions that serve the disabled individual's best interests.

*Conservatorship and Guardianship in Minnesota:*

[www.mncourts.gov/Help-Topics/Guardianship-and-Conservatorship.aspx](http://www.mncourts.gov/Help-Topics/Guardianship-and-Conservatorship.aspx)

## **Vocational Rehabilitation:**

The Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services unit can help an individual prepare for, find and keep a job, and live as independently as possible. With the right kind of training, preparation and workplace accommodations, individuals with autism can have rewarding careers.

The centers and counselors help in improving computer skills, provide vocational training, provide advice and guidance in networking and getting jobs and also with assistive technology. They also help with job placement. They also are involved in the "Ticket to Work" program and can advise on social security benefits.

To apply, you must contact your local office and meet with a vocational counselor. It takes approximately 60 days to determine if you are eligible and what services can be provided to you.

To find your local VR office, go to <http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/workforce-centers>.

## **Social Security:**

Benefits should be applied for before the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and then be re-evaluated after the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is also important that the office be contacted well in advance before the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to understand that eligibility and application process.

Applicants may apply online or by contacting Social Security directly. Local Social Security offices can be found using SSA's office locator or by calling 800-772-1213.

- *Social Security Administration:* [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)
- *Social Security Benefit Application:* [www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityonline](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityonline)
- *Social Security Benefits for People with Disabilities:* [www.ssa.gov/disability](http://www.ssa.gov/disability)
- *Social Security Office Locator:* <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>

## **Housing Resources:**

Minnesota Public Housing Agency Contact Information:  
[www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/mn.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/mn.cfm)

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in Minnesota  
<http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/states/minnesota>

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:  
[www.disability.gov/resource/disability-govs-guide-housing](http://www.disability.gov/resource/disability-govs-guide-housing)

## Minnesota Resources

### **Special Education Division**

Minnesota Department of Education

(651) 582-8616

[mde.special-ed@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.special-ed@state.mn.us)

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/SpecEdProg>

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/JustParent/SpecEdStu>

*Minnesota Department of Education Autism Spectrum Disorders page:*

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/SpecEdClass/DisabCateg/AutSpecDis>

*Planning Guide for Minnesota Students Entering Post-Secondary Education Programs*

[education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/SpecialEd/documents/Publication/011395.pdf](http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/SpecialEd/documents/Publication/011395.pdf)

*Special Education Secondary Transition Planning*

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/SpecEdProg/SecTrans>

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

<http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities>

### **Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities**

(651) 296-4018

[admin.dd@state.mn.us](mailto:admin.dd@state.mn.us)

[www.mnddc.org](http://www.mnddc.org)