

Transition Information: DC

Timeline

- *By the age of 14:*
 - Before 9th grade, but not before 8th grade, the IEP must include a prospective course of study and a graduation plan.
- *By the age of 16:*
 - The IEP must be in effect by the student's 16th birthday, which indicates the student's plan for activities and programs through the transition process.
 - The local education agency (LEA) should conduct a transition assessment in the area of living skills, vocational training and different aspects of education. The information from that assessment must also be placed in the IEP. This should also happen before the student turns 16.
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in DC is 18)
 - The student must be informed of the transfer of rights and the guardianship options by age 17.
 - 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:*
 - 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.
 - 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.
- *At age 18:*
 - Register to vote.
 - Upon an individual's 18th 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:

The IEP must be in effect by the student's 16th birthday, which indicates the student's plan for activities and programs through the transition process. A team should be assembled for coordinating activities and preparing the student for the future. The IEP must be reviewed annually and altered to meet the students changing needs.

The LEA should conduct a transition assessment in the area of living skills, vocational training and different aspects of education. The information from that assessment must also be placed in the IEP. This should also happen before the student turns 16.

After the student leaves high school, within a year of their exit, the OSSE must complete a follow-up survey for the student. The LEA must also provide all the accurate demographic information about the student prior to their graduation or exit from secondary school.

Education:

Before 9th grade, but not before 8th grade, the IEP must include a prospective course of study and a graduation plan. The LEA must allow all students to earn a high school diploma. If the transition team believes that that path is not appropriate or possible for a student, then the IEP must determine an alternate course of study. Then, a statement of the parent's consent that their child will be pursuing an alternative must be given to the LEA. The IEP must also include why the student cannot achieve a high school diploma.

In terms of achieving the high school diploma, the state does provide minimum graduation requirements, which LEAs are not allowed to change. Disabled youth have the option of getting a standard diploma, a certificate of attendance or a certificate of achievement. Any allowances made to those who are pursuing the regular diploma are addressed individually in the IEP and extensions are often granted. There are no exit exams for the District of Columbia.

Guardianship/Conservatorship:

The age of majority in DC is 18 years old and therefore, the transfer of rights will occur at the student's 18th birthday. This must be discussed at all prior IEP meetings and also the student must be informed of the decision made about his/her guardianship after their 18th birthday. It is possible that the parents or another adult can obtain legal guardianship if the student is legally considered to be incapable of making their own decisions about their welfare. If the transfer of rights occurs, an informed consent by both the parents and the student must be included in the IEP before the student's 18th birthday. All the above information should also be indicated to the LEA.

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program helps individuals with physical, psychiatric and/or learning disabilities face the challenges of the modern workplace. This may include identifying job goals based on individual interests and aptitudes, providing funds for college and vocational training, assessing work site accommodations, educating an employer about the Americans With Disabilities Act, or assisting an individual returning to work after adjusting to a new disabling condition. Vocational rehabilitation services can often reduce or remove barriers to employment. Priority is given to those individuals who have the most severe disabilities in areas such as communication, mobility, work tolerance and work skills.

Social Security:

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

Housing Resources:

DC Public Housing Agency Contact Information:

www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/dc.cfm

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in DC

http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/states/district_of_columbia

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:

www.disability.gov/resource/disability-govs-guide-housing

DC Resources

DC Office of Special Education

(202) 442-5488

<http://dcps.dc.gov/specialeducation>

Transition Services, Programs and Supports: <http://dcps.dc.gov/service/transition-services-programs-and-supports>

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

DC Department on Disability Services

(202) 442-8663

<http://dds.dc.gov/service/vocational-rehabilitation-services-rsa>

Department on Disability Services

(202) 730-1700

<http://dds.dc.gov>

DC Partners in Transition:

www.dctransition.org