



Transition Information: Illinois

Timeline

- *By the age of 15:*
 - The first IEP which includes transition services must go into effect when the student becomes 14 ½.
 - The transition services include post-secondary goals and services that the student needs to transition into high school and adulthood. They should include any assessments that were done, the post-secondary outcomes (e.g. employment, college, etc.) and also a prospective course of study for the rest of the student's period of education.
- *Before the age of 17:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in Illinois is 18)
 - At 18 years old, all the rights will transfer to the student, including the abilities to make financial and legal decisions. Therefore, to become a person's guardian, the local circuit court has to appoint someone to be that individual's guardian.
 - 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 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.
- *At the age of 21:*
 - Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is provided to all developmentally-disabled up until age 21.

Starting the Transition:

The first IEP which includes transition services must go into effect when the student becomes 14 ½. The transition services include post-secondary goals and services that the student needs to transition into high school and adulthood. They should include any assessments that were done, the post-secondary outcomes (e.g. employment, college, etc.) and also a prospective course of study for the rest of the student's period of education. They should also include how the student will contribute to community and how involved external agencies will need to be in the student's adult life. Most students are eligible from 14 ½ to 22 years of age.

The required documentation as of this year for the IEP includes a statement of problem, which describes the evaluations of the student based on abilities, cognitive functions, communication capabilities, etc. and must include information about how the student was performing prior to being involved in any intervention processes. This could include a standard of comparison based on how the district or local community performs in similar peer evaluations, an expected and current level of performance and the date that any discrepancy was found.

The IEP should also include a list of the student's strengths and weaknesses, which at 14 ½ should be related to the possible post-secondary goals, which can be determined based on interviews, reviews, tests or observations. The IEP should include how decisions for certain interventions were decided and how any plans were developed, including evidence that the intervention was always scientifically based, using research and also has integrity. It should include an education plan, the current status of the student, instructional needs and any other additional information that would be influential in any pertinent decisions.

Education:

The state of Illinois has guidelines for graduation requirements, but LEAs can choose to set their own requirements based on the needs of the student. However, Illinois has increased the requirements for students with disabilities to complete high school and graduate. The options for high school graduation for disabled students are: a standard high school diploma, a certificate of attendance, or a certificate of achievement. There are allowances that are permitted for students with disabilities so that they can get their high school diploma. This includes reducing the number of required credits. All other allowances must be addressed in the individual's IEP. Illinois has no state exit exam.

Guardianship:

The age of majority in Illinois is 18. At 18 years old, all the rights will transfer to the student, including the abilities to make financial and legal decisions. Therefore, to

become a person's guardian, the local circuit court has to appoint someone to be that individual's guardian. This process can take as little as two weeks to many months. Therefore, it is best to start the process as early as the individual's 17th birthday. This process can be lengthy and expensive.

First, there must be some report that certifies the level of the disability and the necessity of a guardian. That form should be obtained from the local probate court or can be accessed by an attorney. This report should be as detailed as possible to distinguish the necessity of guardianship and limited guardianship. This report is usually completed by a physician but can be completed by other professionals who are more aware of other aspects of the individual's life. It is also best in this process to appoint an attorney to assess the need for guardianship to ensure that the individual's needs are met. This is called a guardian ad litem. The documents that need to be prepared if guardianship is the necessary process include: a petition, a rights notice, a summons, a notice to the interested parties, an order, an oath, a bond, a statement and another order.

The Illinois Health Care Surrogate Act provides the means of allowing another person who is closely related to the disabled individual to make medical decision for the individual if he or she is unable to do so. It does not require court appointment if there is no guardian. Also, power of attorney will allow the lawyers to make decisions for the individual.

Limited guardianship is also an option, which means that the disabled individual does have the ability to make many of his or her decisions. The powers of that guardian need to be listed in the court order when the guardian is being appointed. There is also plenary guardianship which allows the appointed person to make all decisions of the individual, but in consultation with him or her. The most stringent form of guardianship is full guardianship, which means that the person is deemed completely incapable of making important decisions (health, finance, etc.) and so a guardian must make those decisions in his or her place. There is also a guardian of the estate (property, finances), temporary guardianship (used in emergencies, lasts for 60 days), successor guardianship (which is used if the person who was originally the individual's guardian can no longer be their guardian), and testamentary guardianship, which transfers the power through the parents will when they die to another guardian, who also must be legally appointed in court.

Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission: www.illinois.gov/sites/gac

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation office help people with disabilities find and keep jobs. Our goal is to help our customers find quality employment that pays a living wage

and offers a chance for advancement. The Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) is a program sponsored by the Illinois State's Division of Rehabilitation Services to prepare disabled students to become more active members in their communities and in employment after they have graduated from high school. They provide career counseling, referrals, job training and independent learning services to teach new graduates with disabilities how to survive in the real world. They operate at state, regional and local levels to discuss and decide what programs and outcomes would be best for certain students. The Department of Rehabilitation Services funds those programs which help to educate students and the community. The Next Steps program also provides training to families about planning and identifying the appropriate resources for each individual.

You must complete a Rehabilitation Services Referral Form at:

<https://wr.dhs.illinois.gov/wrpublic/wr/>

To locate the nearest VR office, go to: www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12

Social Security:

Benefits should be applied for before the student's 18th birthday and then be re-evaluated after the student's 18th birthday. It is also important that the office be contacted well in advance before the student's 18th 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
- *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:

Illinois Public Housing Agency Contact Information:

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

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in Illinois

<http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/states/illinois>

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:

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

Illinois Resources

Illinois Special Education Services

(866) 262-6663

www.isbe.state.il.us/SPEC-ED

Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Illinois Department of Human Services

(800) 843-6154 (V/TTY)

www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29737

Transition Services

Illinois State Board of Education

www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/total.htm

Tools and Resources for Transition:

www.isbe.state.il.us/spec-ed/html/indicator13.htm

Illinois Department of Human Services

Transition Youth Services for Youth with Disabilities:

www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=35176

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Illinois Department of Human Services

(888) 337-5267

www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=32253

Division of Mental Health

Illinois Department of Human Services

(800) 843-6154 (Hotline)

(217) 785-6023

(800) 447-6404 (TTY)

www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29735