

## Transition Information: Michigan

### Timeline

- *By the age of 14:*
  - The IEP should be started by the student's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and should include information regarding the strengths and preferences of the student and the possible paths that the student can take towards a specific long-term goal.
- *By the age of 16:*
  - The IEP should go into effect by the time the student turns 16 years old. At this time, the IEP must include a statement of needed transitions services.
  - Most students get Michigan Rehabilitation Services counselors at the age of 16, some earlier.
- *Before the age of 17:*
  - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in Michigan is 18).
    - The student should be informed of the pending transfer of rights, and a statement of consent should be included in the IEP. The student should spend that year preparing for the transfer.
    - If necessary, a petition for appointment of a guardian for an individual may be filed at the Probate Court of the county of residence of the individual.
  - 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.
- *At age 26:*
  - Individuals with disabilities are no longer entitled to special education services. The state requires schools to educate students in some disability categories from **birth to age 26**, compared to birth through age 21 as required by federal law.

## **Starting the Transition Process:**

The IEP should be started by the student's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and should go into effect by the time the student turns 16, which is when the IEP must include a statement of needed transitions services. The IEP should include information regarding the strengths and preferences of the student and the possible paths that the student can take towards a specific long-term goal whether that goal is college/university or employment. It should also indicate the required services that will help the student along their chosen path, such as vocational training and job placement. It should include a list of prospective coursework for the student and the graduation plan that the student chooses to pursue. Most people are forced to age out of the special education program at age 26.

Organizations such as the Michigan Transition Services Association are involved in local communities to make them more aware of ways that the community can help students transition from school to adulthood. They help to provide leadership skills and encourage preparation and growth of the community to find new ways that any student with a disability can get the services they need.

## **Education:**

The state requires that every school completes an Educational Development Plan (EDP) before the start of 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This will help to organize a student's IEP in accordance with the services and plans the school has for the student. Therefore, a statement of needed transition services should be included in the IEP by the time the student turns 16 years old. The IEP should include at this age a list of courses that the student should take in order to complete his or her long-term goal. Also, since Michigan does permit a personalized curriculum, it is best to integrate special education programs with other programs so that the student can adapt to the real world.

With regards to high school graduation, the state provides minimum requirements for high school graduation which LEAs can add to. The only option that students have with respect to diplomas is to either get the standard high school diploma or to not get the standard diploma. There are no special certificates or occupational diploma options. To complete the requirements and get the necessary credits, the state does allow all students to have a personal curriculum option to get the credits. There is also no state exit exam to graduate. Therefore, it is possible for disabled students to get standard high school diplomas.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation:**

Most students get MRS counselors when they turn 16 years old, but some begin earlier. The services can usually continue until the person ages out of the special education program at the age of 26. They provide Youth employment services, services that help

students decided what they want to do in the future, self-employment education and other related services.

To find your local VR office, visit [www.michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1607,7-122-25392\\_41191--00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdcd/0,1607,7-122-25392_41191--00.html).

## **Guardianship:**

The age of majority in Michigan is 18, which means that all rights to make life-related decisions transfer to the student from their parents or former guardians. However, if the person is thought to be incapable of making decisions about his or her own welfare, a guardian can be appointed well before the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The court system appoints the guardian for the individual.

Under Michigan law, guardianship for individuals with developmental disabilities is utilized only as is necessary to promote and protect the well-being of the individual. A petition for appointment of a guardian for an individual may be filed at the Probate Court of the county of residence of the individual.

The court will decide on full or limited guardianship, depending on the abilities of the individual. A conservator can also be appointed by the court to manage the estate, property, or other business affairs of an individual.

## **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:**

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

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

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

## Michigan Resources

### **Office of Special Education**

Michigan Department of Education

(517) 373-0923

[www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530\\_6598---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_6598---,00.html)

### **Michigan Transition Services Administration**

[www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com)

*Michigan Youth Transition Services Frequently Asked Questions:*

[www.michigan.gov/documents/mdcd/faqtran120408\\_260393\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdcd/faqtran120408_260393_7.pdf)

### **Michigan Transition Outcomes Project (MI-TOP)**

Michigan Department of Education

(517) 908-3939

[info@mitransition.org](mailto:info@mitransition.org)

[mi-top.cenmi.org](http://mi-top.cenmi.org)

### **Michigan Rehabilitation Services**

Department of Health and Human Services

(517) 373-3390

(800) 605-6722

[www.michigan.gov/mrs](http://www.michigan.gov/mrs)

### **Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council**

Department of Health and Human Services

(517) 335-3159

[www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil](http://www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil)