

Transition Information: Nebraska

Timeline

- *By the age of 14:*
 - The transition planning should begin when the student is 14 years old. The transition team should start the Transition IEP which 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.
 - Vocational training can begin as early as 14 years of age.
- *By the age of 16:*
 - At age 16, the transition IEP must go into effect and the student should begin receiving transition services.
 - 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:*
 - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. **(Unlike most states, the age of majority in Nebraska is 19)**
 - There should be consent by both the families and the individual that he or she understands the importance of the transfer of rights at age 19. This can be included in the individual's IEP.
 - 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.
 - 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 Process:

The transition planning should begin well before the student's 16th birthday. At age 16, the transition IEP must go into effect and the student should begin receiving transition services. These services should be used in preparation for the desired post-school outcomes, including future education, employment, and independent living. There should be a statement of needed transition services which may include instruction, vocational training and life skills education.

Education:

IEP's must include a specific list of courses that the student should take during his or her secondary and post-secondary education years. These courses should be taken to prepare the student for the post-school outcomes, which could be further education (college) or employment. The desired diploma option should be included in the IEP also. All of these decisions should be based on the needs and preferences of the student.

In terms of graduation, the state of Nebraska does not set any minimum requirements for graduation and allows the IEP teams to do so on a case-by-case basis. This means that individuals are eligible for a diploma once they have completed their IEP goals. The diploma options are: a standard high school diploma, a certificate of attendance, or a certificate of achievement. Nebraska offers a variety of allowances to allow the student to be awarded with a standard diploma, including reducing the number of necessary credits, taking credits from alternate courses to meet the requirements, lowering the performance criteria, granting extensions to meet those requirements, along with other allowances written and approved in an individual's IEP. Nebraska also has no state exit exam.

Students with disabilities are eligible for special education services until they complete their graduation requirements and age out of the program or turn 21 years old.

Guardianship:

The age of majority is 19 years old in Nebraska. At this age, most decisions about the welfare of the student transfers from their parents to themselves. Decisions about medical and financial issues and preparation for making those decisions should be done before the individual turns 19 years old. There should be consent by both the families and the individual that he or she understands the importance of this transfer. This can be included in the IEP of the individual depending on the individual. However, the rights to make education-related decisions are not automatically transferred to the student when they turn 19.

If a person is legally considered to be incapable of making these kinds of decisions, families or prospective guardians can petition for guardianship over the individual in the capacity of either a full or limited guardian. During the hearing process that will take place after the petition is filed in the local district court, the court will decide what the powers of the guardian will be and over what aspects of the individual's life the guardian will have jurisdiction over. Some of the possible powers the guardian might have include selecting the person's residence, the medical care, the protection of property and arranging support services. Other options include conservatorship, power of attorney or medical power of attorney for emergencies.

Reaching the Age of Majority: Your Rights and Responsibilities

www.nebarfnd.org/images/pdf/aom/aom2006.pdf

Vocational Rehabilitation:

The Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation program provides direct services for employers and people with disabilities that lead to employment. They provide job placement and training opportunities to develop the necessary skill set to survive in the current job market. They also integrate the instruction into regular secondary training so that the transition can be carried out smoothly. This prepares students for their post-secondary training, employment and independent living. By working with the vocational rehabilitation staff, they help to prepare an IPE (*Individualized Plan of Employment*).

Most people enter their employment program (which includes skills assessment, career counseling, job placement and job training) during the second semester of their junior year or their senior year. VR services continue until the individual has reached 90 days of successful employment. However, individuals can begin their vocational training as early as 14 years of age. They are allowed to remain in the program until the program fulfills their needs. The program also helps individuals with planning for college and choosing colleges that will be the best environments for their needs.

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:

Nebraska Public Housing Agency Contact Information:

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

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in Nebraska

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

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:

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

Nebraska Resources

Nebraska Office of Special Education

Department of Education

(402) 471-2471

www.education.ne.gov/sped

Nebraska Office of Special Education – Transition Services

State Transition Coordinator

Nebraska Department of Education

Phone: (402) 595-2092

Fax: 402-595-2727

Transition Services Website: <http://ndetransition.site.esu9.org/>

Nebraska School Counseling

Department of Education

(402) 471-4811

www.education.ne.gov/cared

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation

Nebraska Department of Education

(402) 471-3644

www.vr.nebraska.gov

VR Transition Works: www.vr.nebraska.gov/youth/transition_works.html

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

(402) 471-8501

Dhhs.developmentaldisabilities@nebraska.gov

http://dhhs.ne.gov/developmental_disabilities