

## Transition Information: New Hampshire

### **Timeline**

- *By the age of 14:*
  - Families should decide whether a transition plan needs to be included in the IEP or if the student is capable of continuing in a regular education program.
  - If transition services are required, families should gather 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 will go into effect when the student turns 16, meaning that the student will be allowed to start using their transition services at that time.
  - A transition team should be formed and a detailed plan for the future should be laid out based on the individual's strengths and wishes.
- *Before the age of 17:*
  - The guardianship/conservatorship process should begin. (The age of majority in New Hampshire is 18)
  - To begin the process, one has to petition for guardianship and prove that the person is incapable of making decisions about his or her own welfare.
  - The student should begin vocational rehabilitation around age 16 or 17.
- *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 21:*
  - The individual is no longer eligible for special education services.

## **Starting the Transition Process:**

The transition process should begin when the student is 14 years old. Families should decide whether a transition plan needs to be included in the IEP or if the student is capable of continuing in a regular education program and following the state-mandated regulations concerning education and transitions.

If the transition portion of the IEP is necessary, it might be best to assemble a transition team which includes the parents of the student, the student's teachers, therapists and even doctors and representatives of other agencies whose services will be used by the student in the future.

The IEP will go into effect when the student turns 16, meaning that the student will be allowed to start using their transition services at that time. Those services will be focused on helping the student achieve his or her post-secondary goals, and also teaching them the necessary vocational and living skills for his or her future. It should include a statement of needed transition services. It should also include a list of courses that the student plans to take during each level of education. This should factor into their annual goals at the annual IEP meetings, when IEP goals are revised based on the progress the student is making. It should include possible community and employment experiences that the student will have throughout the transition period.

## **Education:**

It is important to check with the individual's school as early as possible as to what kind of curriculums they offer for children with disabilities, as well as the graduation options for those children. Students with disabilities are eligible for the special education program until they complete their IEP goals or until the age of 21.

In terms of graduation, the state sets a list of requirements that must be followed and that LEAs cannot change. There are also no allowances that are permitted for students with disabilities to get the standard diploma, which is the only diploma option that the state of New Hampshire offers. They have no state exit exam to graduate high school.

Therefore, it is important to address in the student's IEP a detailed list of the courses that the student will be taking during high school and even beyond that. It would be best if the transition team could specify at what level or age each service will be administered or what courses will be taken. The IEP should also include what graduation plan the student is planning on pursuing, and whether or not they will be able to get the standard diploma.

Also, if post-secondary education is being considered, it is important that the required applications and standardized tests are completed in the required time period and before the student turns 21 and ages out of special education programs.

## **Guardianship/Conservatorship:**

The age of majority in New Hampshire is 18 years old. At this age, the rights of individuals with disabilities will transfer from their original guardians (their parents, etc.) to themselves. This means that the students will have the right to make their own decisions about their education, finances, health-related issues and living situations.

If the individual is incapable of making those kinds of decisions, there is a guardianship process that will transfer those powers from the student to another person. However, this process is often lengthy so it is best to begin the legal proceedings as early as the student's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday to ensure that the guardianship is approved by the court well before his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

There are various levels of guardianship and conservatorship ranging from full guardianship to limited guardianship. The court will approve the guardian and specify the terms of the guardianship during the hearing. To begin the process, one has to petition for guardianship and prove that the person is incapable of making decisions about his or her own welfare. Then, a legal proceeding will take place in which attorneys should be present for both sides of the proceeding, representing the prospective guardians and also the individual. To prove the person's incapacity, it is important to provide clear examples of the person's disabilities, including evidence.

*General Information about New Hampshire Guardianships of Incapacitated Persons:*  
[www.courts.state.nh.us/probate/servicecenters/pamphlets/pamphletfiles/GuardianshipIncapinfo.pdf](http://www.courts.state.nh.us/probate/servicecenters/pamphlets/pamphletfiles/GuardianshipIncapinfo.pdf)

*New Hampshire Probate Courts: Guardianship:*  
[www.courts.state.nh.us/probate/guardianship.htm](http://www.courts.state.nh.us/probate/guardianship.htm)

## **Vocational Rehabilitation:**

The New Hampshire Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation helps eligible New Hampshire citizens with disabilities to secure suitable employment and financial and personal independence by providing rehabilitation services. The VR offices help teach students about independent living, post-secondary education, and also provide vocational training.

This includes career guidance, education about the current state of the job market, job placement and employer contacts. It also integrates similar services into a school curriculum to help make the transition smoother. To find out if an individual is eligible for these services, contact a local VR counselor who can confirm eligibility and also begin to assess the areas where the student needs the most training.

To find a local VR Counselor, visit

[www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational/contact.htm](http://www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational/contact.htm)

It is best to begin the vocational training process two years before the student completes high school or his or her educational program. Therefore, at around the age of 16, the student should begin vocational rehabilitation. It is best to apply for these programs at least two years in advance because if the student begins the process at a later point, the transition will not be as simple and easy and the counselors will have to move at a quicker pace to make the individual ready to work once they graduate.

## **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:**

New Hampshire Public Housing Agency Contact Information:

[www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/nh.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/nh.cfm)

US Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD in New Hampshire

[http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/states/new\\_hampshire](http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/states/new_hampshire)

Disability.gov Guide to Housing:

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

## **New Hampshire Resources**

### **Bureau of Special Education**

New Hampshire Department of Education  
(603) 271-6693

[www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special\\_ed](http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed)

*Secondary Transition Information:*

[www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special\\_ed/sec\\_trans.htm](http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed/sec_trans.htm)

### **Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning**

New Hampshire Department of Education  
(603) 271-3801

[www.education.nh.gov/career](http://www.education.nh.gov/career)

*Vocational Rehabilitation:*

[www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational](http://www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational)

*School Transition Services:*

[www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational/school\\_trans.htm](http://www.education.nh.gov/career/vocational/school_trans.htm)

### **Bureau of Developmental Services**

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services  
(603) 271-5034

[www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcbcs/bds](http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dcbcs/bds)

### **The New Hampshire Council on Autism Spectrum Disorders**

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