

# Post- Secondary Transition Planning & Services

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# Equip **for** Equality

*Mission: Advance the human & civil rights of people with disabilities in Illinois*

- ▶ Founded in 1985
- ▶ Private and Independent not -for-profit designated as the Protection and advocacy (P&A) system for people with disabilities in the State of Illinois
- ▶ Free legal assistance for people with disabilities about issues related to their disability

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# Civil Rights Team

- ▶ Addresses issues involving community integration, self determination, and anti-discrimination
  - ▶ Fundamental rights team addresses issues involving guardianship, prisoners' rights, and issues occurring in nursing homes and state operated facilities.
  - ▶ Employment Rights Helpline provides information, resources, and advice regarding rights under the ADA. Provide fact sheets, sample letters, and forms.

# Independent Monitoring Unit



- Investigates allegations of abuse and neglect in public and private facilities in Illinois.
- Facility monitoring and oversight
- Systemic and individual advocacy
- Rep payee monitoring

# Special Education Clinic



*We help students with disabilities secure a free appropriate public education. Any parent with a special education concern or question can call our statewide helpline for assistance.*

We provide:

- ▶ Self-Advocacy Assistance
- ▶ Sample Letters and Forms
- ▶ Trainings to Interested Groups
- ▶ Legal Advocacy, in Select Cases



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# Transition Planning & Services





# The **Right to Transition Services**

Transition services are a **coordinated set of activities** for a child with a disability that are designed to be within a results-oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

These services are based on the **individual** child's needs, taking into account their strengths, preferences, and interests.

34 CFR § 300.43(a).

# The Transition Plan

- ▶ **Student driven process** , mapping out a child's future with clear directions to help the student develop her potential and achieve her goals.
- ▶ Age 14 ½ through the end of the school year of their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday or when they graduate high school
- ▶ Created by the IEP team and updated every year
- ▶ Outlines a child's current levels, goals, and services the student needs to reach those



## Assessments

Post-  
Secondary  
Goals

Course of  
Study

Services

- ▶ “Age-Appropriate” assessments related to training, education, employment, and, if applicable, independent living skills
- ▶ Should Answer:
  - ▶ **What** does the student want to do after school?
  - ▶ **Where** does the student want to live ?
  - ▶ **How** does the student want to take part in the community ?
  - ▶ **What skills** does the student need to develop to achieve their goals?

### Examples:

- Behavioral assessments
- Aptitude tests
- Interest and work values inventories
- Personality or preference tests
- Career maturity or readiness tests
- Self-determination assessments
- Work-related temperament scales
- Vocational assessment



- ▶ Goals must be based on the student’s “strengths, preferences, and interests”
- ▶ Focused on **Employment** , **Education or Training** , and **Independent Living** .
- ▶ Reviewed annually and should become **increasingly specific** as the student comes closer to leaving high school.

### Example:



Starting in June 2014, Jane will ride the train to her job at the bakery, where she will get training, to improve her culinary skills.

### Non-Example:



Matthew wants to be an NFL player after high school.



- ▶ List every course the student is required to take to graduate
  - ▶ Opportunity to discuss need for services beyond 4 - year high school model
- ▶ Individualized to meet the student's needs, including if your child requires more than four years in high school
  - ▶ Does the student's goal require certain courses?
  - ▶ Will certain courses be helpful for the student to achieve her goals?



Assessments

Post-  
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**Individualized education strategies** to improve the student's academic and functional achievement.

- ▶ What services & supports are needed to achieve her goals?

**Must Include:**

- ▶ **Instruction**
- ▶ **Community Experiences**
- ▶ **Job and other adult living objectives**

***If appropriate:***

- ▶ **Daily Living Skills**
- ▶ **Functional Vocational Evaluation**
- ▶ **Linkages for Post-Graduation**



# Examples of Transition Services

- ▶ Instruction
  - ▶ high school courses
  - ▶ career program
  - ▶ post-high school curriculum
- ▶ Evidenced-based reading methodologies
- ▶ Behavior programs
- ▶ Specialized consultants
- ▶ Related Services
  - ▶ Transportation, AT, Counseling, etc.
- ▶ Community experiences
- ▶ Development of employment (job shadow/placement)
- ▶ Post-school adult living objectives
- ▶ Acquiring daily living skills
- ▶ Evaluations (assistive technology, vocational, etc.)
- ▶ Special education and enhanced related services



## Denial of FAPE

- Failure to provide timely and appropriate transition services may be a denial of FAPE. Some examples include:
  - Plan does not include measurable goals
  - Not based on comprehensive transition assessment
  - Pre-determination of a student's transition services or placement
  - Excluding parents from development of transition plan
  - Generic plans and programs, if they do not meet individual student needs
  - Services outlined in the plan are not actually provided

# Dispute Resolution Options

## Independent Education Evaluation (IEE)

Request an IEE to obtain reliable and accurate assessment data.

## IEP meeting

Request an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns with the IEP team and revise the transition plan or IEP services.

## Mediation

Request mediation to reach a binding, out of court resolution with the district.

## Due Process Hearing

Request a due process hearing to bring the issue before an impartial hearing officer to decide.

## Administrative State Complaint

File a state complaint with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to get the state to investigate the problem and issue findings.

# Additional Considerations During Transition





# What happens when a student is 18?

- ▶ 18 is the age of majority in Illinois.
  - ▶ School must provide notice one year before your child turns 18
- ▶ At 18, a student has the right to make their own life decisions, including those related to their education.
- ▶ Students can choose to **delegate their educational decision-making rights** -
  - ▶ Must be renewed if extension beyond one year and can be revoked at any time
- ▶ If a student decides to retain decision-making rights, parent can still be involved in the process with their consent.
  - ▶ The student can also sign a **release** so that the school can continue to communicate with the parent when the student is not present.



# Graduation

- ▶ When a student graduates with a “regular high school diploma” their **eligibility for special education ends**.
- ▶ Graduation may be **delayed** if a student needs further educational programming, including transition services.
  - ▶ Parent/Child may request delay, but the school does not have to agree to delay graduation if the student has met graduation requirements.
- ▶ Graduation is a **change in placement**
  - ▶ Must be discussed in IEP meeting before the student is graduated
  - ▶ School must provide notice of intention to graduate the student(PWN).



## Summary of Performance

For a student who graduates with a regular high school diploma or ages out of special education eligibility, *a public agency must provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's post high school goals.*

*§300.305(3)*

- ▶ Document meant to **assist in determining reasonable accommodations** for student in post-secondary setting
- ▶ Should be developed by **IEP team**, including the student, during the last year of the student's eligibility
- ▶ Team should consider that this document may be used by the student as a **self-advocacy tool** with future employers, college disability services, tutors, DRS coordinators, and other service providers.

# Transition & the Division of Rehabilitation Services



# Division of Rehabilitation Services (**DRS**)

*Designed to help people with disabilities (students & adults) participate in the community through work, school and independent living.*

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) & Home Services Program
- Goal of VR program = Help people with disabilities “prepare for, secure, retain, **advance** in or regain employment” 34 CFR § 361.42(A)(1)(III)

They can help with:

- Job training and job coaching
- Finding a job
- Paying for college or another training program
- Assistive Technology
- Vocational Evaluations
- Independent Living (transportation and housing)



# Who is **eligible** for DRS services?



To qualify for DRS services an individual must:

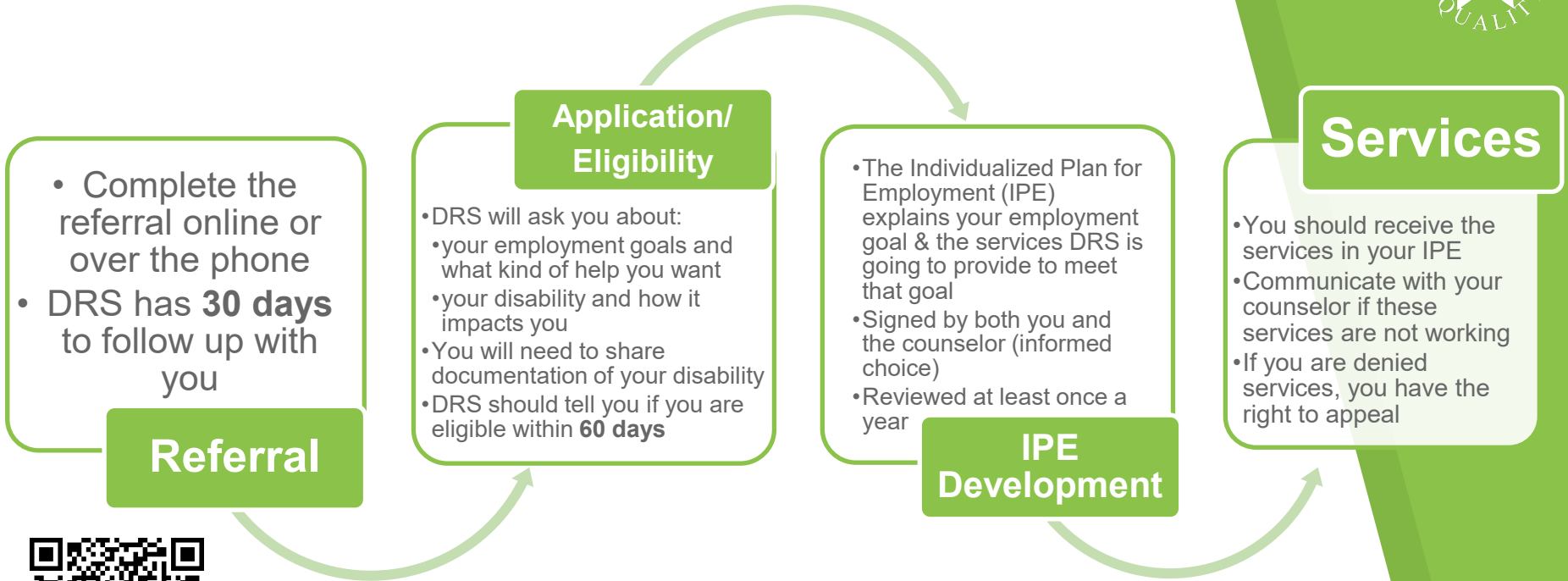


\*This includes high school and transition students who need assistance in preparing to enter the workforce or are looking for part time work experiences.

# Examples of VR Services



# How Does DRS Work?



**DRS  
Transition  
Services**



# Pre-Employment Transition Services



- ▶ Services designed for youth to be prepared to enter the workforce and move towards greater independence
- ▶ Available for all students with a disability
- ▶ Do not require you to be a DRS customer already and does not take the place of VR eligibility process
- ▶ Provided through partnerships with school and local agencies

# Pre-Employment Transition Services: **Focus**

- ▶ Job exploration counseling
- ▶ Work-based learning experiences in integrated settings, in and out of school
- ▶ Counseling on post-secondary opportunities
- ▶ Workplace readiness training
- ▶ Self-advocacy skills

# Pre-ETS Programs

## Fast Track

- ▶ Serves potentially eligible individuals
  - ▶ 14 – 21 years old
  - ▶ Not already a DRS customer
  - ▶ Enrolled in school
- ▶ Work on developing self-advocacy and pre-employment skills

## PECT

- ▶ Serves potentially eligible students and students already found eligible for DRS services
- ▶ Work experience program that includes work -based learning experiences, both in school and in the community

# DRS Customers



- ▶ Work with DRS counselor to develop appropriate Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) based on student's employment goal
  - ▶ Similar to IEP, this outlines the student's goal and what services DRS will provide to help them achieve it.
- ▶ Can still participate in STEP program and other Pre-ETS services with an IPE
- ▶ VR must coordinate with school transition planning, this can include attending IEP meetings

# Common Services for Youth:



Dual Enrollment

College &  
Training  
Funding

Assistive  
Technology &  
AAC

Comprehensive  
Transition  
Programs

Job Coaching  
Services



# Dual Enrollment

- ▶ High school students who have an IEP can take classes at a community college or post-secondary educational institution **while still receiving services** from the school district.
  - ▶ Must still meet requirements for enrollment at post-secondary institution
- ▶ This includes dual enrollment in Comprehensive Transition Programs
- ▶ DRS can support current high school students who are interested in taking courses at the community college in efforts to improve their employability and achieve their employment goals.
  - ▶ Includes, but not limited to dual-enrolment courses, remedial, continuing education, and pre-employment transition skills.

# Job Coaching Services

A job coach works with individuals **on-the-job** to help them be successful in employment.

- ▶ Job coaches help individuals learn new tasks, gain vocational skills, navigate the workplace, and learn how to interact with supervisors and colleagues.
- ▶ The goal with job coaches typically is that they will be faded out as the individual becomes more independent in their workplace.
  - ▶ It may be helpful for a job coach to come back in if an individual's job changes, i.e. new tasks, a promotion, or working with a new supervisor.
- ▶ Anyone can be a job coach!

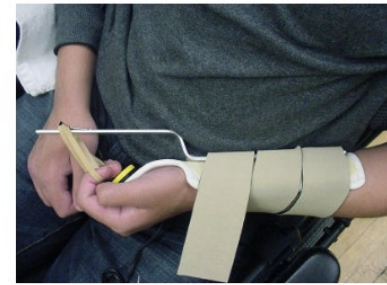
# Assistive Technology & AAC



DRS can pay for assistive technology or AAC devices when an individual needs them to prepare for, secure, retain, or advance or regain an employment outcome.

**Assistive technology** means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

**AAC** means alternative an augmentative communication and refers to AT devices that assist with communication other than oral speech. This includes a range of devices from “light tech” to speech generating devices



# College & Training Funding



- ▶ DRS can help pay for college and other post -secondary training opportunities that are connected to an individual's employment goal.
- ▶ This may include non-degree training programs an individual needs to gain important skills for employment.
- ▶ DRS can also help pay for necessary items, such as books, laptop or tablet, consumable supplies, and other materials required of all students, necessary for a customer to complete his or her training program

## Important Notes:

- The IPE approving college funding must be signed before DRS will issue a payment
- You should work with you counselor to make sure all required materials are turned in as soon as possible.
- How much DRS will pay may depend on the type of school (in-state/out-of-state; public/private) and how much financial aid you get

# Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTPs)



- ▶ CTPs are programs designed for students with intellectual disabilities **seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living** instruction at an institute of higher education to prepare for employment.
- ▶ DRS can pay for a CTP program, if the program is in support of a customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, career interests, and informed choices.

Blackburn University	Blackburn and Beyond
National Louis University	PACE at National Louis University
Richard J Daley College- City Colleges of Chicago	After 22/Occupational, Life, and Academic Skills (OLAS) Program
Judson University	RISE RISE Up
Elmhurst College	Elmhurst Learning and Success Academy (ELSA)
Lewis and Clark Community College	Supported College Transition
Rock Valley College	RAISE Program
University of Iowa	UI Reach
Northwestern College	Northwestern Next



# Advocacy Tips for Youth Working with DRS

- You can receive VR services while still in high school !
- Put a **back-up contact** on your referral
- **Keep track of the timeline** to make sure you do not miss communication and your case does not fall through the cracks
- Ask the DRS counselor to come to your **IEP meeting**
- **Talk with your team** about what services you should ask for
- Think about both your **long-term and short-term** employment goals, which could DRS help you with now? What may you want to explore in the future?
- Request a **vocational evaluation** if you are not sure where to start.
- **Get it in writing**
- Your **parents** can be involved if you want.
- DRS can pay for evaluations to determine **eligibility**
- Your case may be transferred to an **“adult” counselor** when you graduate high school
- You can always **open a new DRS case!**



# How to connect with DRS

- ▶ Find the local office [online](#) based on county and zip code
- ▶ Call your office or fill out [online referral form](#).
- ▶ Typical wait time is 2 weeks for initial contact from DRS to discuss application after submitting referral

# Independent Client Assistance Program





# Issues or Questions about DRS?

*If you or your child run into any **issues or have questions about DRS** or independent living services from your CIL, you can contact the **Client Assistance Program (CAP)***

## Contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP)

- ▶ What CAP does, generally
  - ▶ Helps people who apply for or receive services under the Rehabilitation Act, including vocational rehabilitation and independent living services
  - ▶ Advises and informs people about their rights under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act

# Ways **CAP** can help students in transition:



*Provide information and advice to assist DRS customers and potential applicants in accessing VR services while in school*

- ▶ Help youth and their families **get connected** with Pre-ETS or DRS services in their community
- ▶ **Answer your questions** about DRS services and how they interact with your school special education transition services
- ▶ Assist you in **advocating for the VR and independent living services** your child needs to be successful in employment

# When to “Escalate” Advocacy in the DRS VR system



- ▶ You have several options when you are experiencing a problem with your DRS services
  - ▶ Continue working with your counselor and try to resolve issues
  - ▶ Ask to speak with your counselor’s supervisor
  - ▶ File an appeal to challenge a decision made by DRS

**Contact CAP – we can talk you through the situation and discuss options or play a direct role if needed.**

Understand what is  
available

**Know your rights and  
responsibilities**

**Ask questions**

**Communicate**

**Document Everything!**

Seek Help

**Strategies for  
Advocacy**

# Contact Us



## EFE's Special Education Clinic

Contact our Helpline:  
866 -KIDS-046

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

Or

Contact Me Directly:

Emily Wilson

(312) 895-7309

[emilyw@equipforequality.org](mailto:emilyw@equipforequality.org)

## EFE's Client Assistance Program

Helpline: 1-855-ILCAP-25  
(855-452-2725)

Email:

[cap@equipforequality.org](mailto:cap@equipforequality.org)

Website:

[www.equipforequality.org/cap](http://www.equipforequality.org/cap)

