

VR Services: Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

Overview

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) shares responsibility with educational institutions in preparing youth with disabilities for the transition from school to post-high school endeavors, including employment, education, specialized training and independence.

Generally speaking, local schools are primarily responsible for providing transition-related services while a student is still in school. VR's role is primarily one of planning and preparing for when a student graduates or exits the school system. Communication and collaboration between schools and VR may help to ensure a smoother transition for youth.

Successful transition planning involves VR counselors and educators working together to encourage students and their families to think about goals for life after high school and develop a plan to get there.

Transition is a collaborative process that is student centered and student driven. It is a balance between independent living skills training and vocational skills training and involves the family, educational partners, community resources and other networks of support. Transition is an integral part of the education and rehabilitation process and is based on the individual needs, interests and preferences of the student. Effective Transition planning happens as early as possible and it can assist the student to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to work and live in the community. Transition planning and services are a flexible multi-year process that develops with the student.

Definitions

- **Student** with a Disability
A student with a disability is defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as anyone age 16-21 years old who is attending school, receiving services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Special Education) or considered 504 eligible (including those individuals who are working with Vocational Rehabilitation or VR)
- **Youth** with a Disability
According to WIOA, a youth with a disability is between the ages of 14 and 24. This is useful to know because some supported employment grants through WIOA use the broader “Youth with a Disability” definition. E.g. (Western Washington Indian Education and Training Program (WWIETP)).

Transition Team Roles

- **Participant Youth/Student**
The primary responsibility of the participant is to be his/herself and to decide on his/her vision for the future.
- **VR Counselor**
Responsibilities of the VR counselor might involve vocational planning and career guidance, setting up work opportunities or on-the-job training, helping set up independent living services, participating in transition (IEP) team meetings, assisting with the development of an IPE, helping coordinate other activities relating to the youth/student's goals.
- **Family**
Responsibilities of the family of the youth/student might include encouraging self-advocacy and encouraging the youth/student to take as much control in the transition plan as possible while also expressing needs of the family and encouraging and reinforcing expectations of the transition plan at home.
- **School**
The school is tasked with providing a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities, which often involves individualized educational objectives. Schools often have curriculum addressing independent living skills, self-determination and self-advocacy, social skills, career education, assistive technology, etc.

Sample Video with Case Scenarios

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvvcl8VUwVY>

Comparable Services

- Other sources of funding must be considered for this service and should be documented in the case file.

Resources

- Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment: <http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow>