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# What Comes Next? An Introduction

Often teens and young adults have many questions about the future when they leave school. Questions like: “Where can I get my first **real job**?” or “How do I get **my own** place?” If you have a disability, finding the supports you need to answer these questions may seem difficult. However, this guide is a tool you can use to get information about supports for teens and young adults with disabilities. Remember this guide will help you create a successful future!

## The Choice And Responsibility Are Yours

As a student with disability, teachers and other school staff have planned and arranged services and supports to help you succeed in school. After you leave high school, these decisions become yours. The following activities may help you to make better decisions:

- Think about how you like to spend your time.
- Write a list of things you do well.
- Make a list of things you do not like to do
- Learn about community resources.
- Consider your ability to handle basic skills and if you will need help.
- Ask about different options that may be available to you.

Use the information you have to make plans for your future adult life!

## Planning for the Future Worksheet

Name:

Date:

Use this worksheet to begin to make plans for your future. Remember, you are providing the information so there are no wrong answers!

Make a list of things you like to do with your free time

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Write a list of things you do well

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Make a list of things that you do not like to do

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Daily Activities Checklist

This checklist is designed to let you take a look at different daily activities. Be honest with yourself about your ability to complete each skill. Make an X or checkmark in the box that matches your ability to complete each task. This checklist is for your information so that you can consider services and supports you may need as you become more independent.

### Household Chores

	Skill	I Do It Well	I Can Do It But It's Hard	I Need Help To Do It
1.	Use common kitchen tools (knife, can opener, measuring cups & timer)			
2.	Wash dishes			
3.	Follow a simple recipe			
4.	Make a sandwich			
5.	Wash & dry laundry			
6.	Use stove and oven			
7.	Use microwave oven			
8.	Sweep floor			
9.	Mop floor			
10.	Vacuum carpet			
11.	Purchase food at the grocery store			
12.	Fix a simple meal			
13.	Shop for food			
14.	Clean the bathroom			
15.	Read food label			
16.	Use a ten dollar bill to buy an item and know what change should be given back to me			
17.	Lock the front door			
18.	Take out the trash			
19.	Change a light bulb			
20.	Clean bedroom			

## Healthcare and Emergencies

	Skill	I Do It Well	I Can Do It But It's Hard	I Need Help To Do It
1.	I know how to use the phone at home			
2.	I carry a house key			
3.	I know when & how to call 911			
4.	I can give my medical history to a doctor			
5.	I know my allergies			
6.	I know my diagnosis			
7.	Know where the flashlights are kept at home			
8.	I know what medicine I take regularly			
9.	I know how to make a doctor's appointment			
10.	I know when to make a doctor's appointment			
11.	I can fill a prescription			
12.	I know how to turn the water off at home			
13.	I can unclog a toilet			
14.	I can unclog a sink			
15.	I can use a pay phone			
16.	I can use a cell phone			
17.	I can meet with a doctor or nurse alone			
18.	I can ask a doctor or nurse questions			
19.	I can keep and carry insurance cards			
20.	I know about my disability			

## Transportation and Community Life

	Skill	I Do It Well	I Can Do It But It's Hard	I Need Help To Do It
1.	I know how to ride the bus & train by myself			
2.	I know how to cross the street safely			
3.	I know how to call metro to ask how to get to a location			
4.	I know how much money it costs to ride the bus & train			
5.	I can locate a bus stop			
6.	I can read a bus or train schedule			
7.	I know my address			
8.	I know my phone number			
9.	I know how to use an elevator or escalator safely			
10.	I know how to transfer on a bus or train			
11.	I know 3 people I can call if I need help			
12.	I know my way home from the bus or metro stop			
13.	I know how to call a cab			
14.	I can talk with a bus driver or train station manager			
15.	I know how to use the emergency intercoms in the train stations			

## Personal Care

	Skill	I Do It Well	I Can Do It But It's Hard	I Need Help To Do It
1.	Manage personal grooming (wash hair, take a shower)			
2.	Get a hair cut			
3.	Choose the right clothing to wear			
4.	Get in and out of bed			
5.	Getting dressed in the morning			
6.	Getting ready for bed			
7.	Fold and put clothing away			
8.	I can set and use an alarm clock			
9.	I wake up on my own			
10.	I am able to go to bed early enough so that I get proper sleep			

Write a list of jobs or careers you would like to learn about

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like about these jobs or careers?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What education or training will I need after high school to get this job?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Make a list of goals or dreams you have for your life

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Types of Support

People with and without disabilities receive **supports** or assistance in many ways. There are two main types of supports:

1. Formal Supports-planning, information and services provided by government or private agencies
2. Informal Supports-things we use to help us with daily life and the help, advice, resources, and information we receive from family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, or acquaintances.

Take a look at your answers in the worksheets and checklists. Think about the type of formal supports you may need to achieve your goals. Make a list of formal supports that you would like to learn about from this book.

### Formal Supports Table

	Agency	Provides	Contact Information
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Take a look at the answers you gave in the worksheets and checklists. Think about the type of informal supports you may need to achieve your goals. Make a list of informal supports that could help you reach your goals. Remember if writing is a problem, you may ask someone to help you write down your answers.

### Informal Supports Table

	Helper or Type of Equipment	Activity	Contact Information
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

# MEETINGS AND PLANS TO HELP ME

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Individualized Transition Plan (ITP)** are yearly private meetings where educational plans designed to assist you with becoming a successful adult. Note an IEP and ITP meeting may be held at the same time. The following topics may be discussed at this meeting:

- Future educational plans (college or vocational)
- Employment
- Benefits
- Housing or Residential Supports
- Transportation
- Social Life

The school should tell you and your parents or legal guardians about upcoming IEP meetings. Typically, an IEP meeting brings together a team of people to discuss a student's progress, goals and plans for the year. The following people may attend an IEP meeting:

- Student
- Parents/legal guardians
- Special education teacher
- Regular education teacher
- Transition Specialist
- Principal
- Other people selected by the parent, student, or school

The following questions may be discussed at an IEP meeting:

- ➔ What are my interests, preferences, and goals after graduating or leaving school?
- ➔ What supports or services would be required to reach my goals?
- ➔ What agencies provide the supports and services I will need to reach my goals and what plans need to be made to get those services and supports?
- ➔ Who will be responsible for making plans for needed supports and services?
- ➔ Who will talk with everyone to make sure that I get the help I need to meet my goals?

In order to be able to fully participate in your IEP team meeting, prepare for the meeting ahead of time. The following activities will help you to be ready for the meeting:

- Let your parents and teachers know that you want to attend your IEP meeting.
- Look at your IEP from last year. If you don't understand the language in your IEP, ask your parents or teachers what it means.
- Make a list of questions that you would like to ask in the meeting ahead of time. If writing the questions is difficult, use a tape recorder. Take your questions to the IEP meeting.
- Be ready to talk about your disability. Think about how you would describe your disability.
- What are your goals for the future? Can you think of things that might help you succeed?
- Practice what you want to say at the meeting with your parents, a trusted friend or in front of a mirror.

Attending your IEP meeting can be a little scary at first, but here are some helpful hints that can help you participate in the meeting:

- ✓ Introduce yourself and listen to others as they introduce themselves.
- ✓ Speak up and maintain eye contact.
- ✓ Discuss your strengths, your weaknesses and things that help you to succeed. Remember to talk about your goals.
- ✓ Listen to the suggestions of others and think about if their recommendations will work for you.
- ✓ Ask questions if you do not understand what is being discussed.
- ✓ Take notes or have someone take notes for you.
- ✓ Request a copy of your IEP for your own records.
- ✓ If you hear something that surprises or upsets you, remain calm.

Remember at these meetings your adult life is being discussed and the plans should help you to reach the goals that you listed earlier in the book. You should speak up at these meetings! IEP Goals should be:

- Specific and measurable
- Useful to your life
- Have time frames for learning skills

A part of the transition process includes deciding if you are going to receive a high school diploma or a certificate. The IEP team including the student and parents should make this decision when a student enters 9<sup>th</sup> grade. If you attend a non-graded school, you will probably receive a certificate. The following table outlines some of the differences between a diploma and a certificate.

<b>Diploma</b>	<b>Certificate</b>
Students must meet academic requirements for high school graduation including: 4 units of English, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, 4 units of Science including 3 lab Science units, 2 units World Language.	The certificate focuses on work and daily living skills, and it serves the needs of students who need extra support to keep a job and live in the community.
A high school diploma is needed to get financial aid for college or trade school.	Colleges and trade schools do not recognize a certificate.
High school graduates have better employment opportunities.	Many employers do not consider a certificate to be equal to a diploma.

If you have a question about the IEP/ITP process or any question related to transition, please contact your special education teacher or the DCPS Office of Special Education, Transition Services Unit.

**Office of Special Education**

Marla Oakes, Ph.D., Executive Director  
 825 N. Capitol St., NE, 6th Floor  
 Washington, DC 20002  
 (202) 442-4800 (voice)  
 (202) 442-5517/5518 (fax)

# Community Resources for IEP/ITP Meetings

## **Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.**

2441 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE, suite 205

Washington, DC 20020

(202) 678-8060 (voice)

(202) 678-8062 (fax)

[www.aje-dc.org](http://www.aje-dc.org)

Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc. (AJE) educates and trains parents, teens, and young adults with disabilities about laws that govern public and special education or other conditions that impede learning. Training sessions are offered on:

- Clarifies legal obligations
- Assists families to prepare for IEP and ITP meetings
- Provides training and courses to families on educational services
- Helps parents and transitioning students when disagreements occur regarding educational plans

## **Youth Empowerment Resource Center Project**

Inclusion Research Institute

1010 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 340

Washington, DC 20007

(202) 338-7158 (voice)

(202) 338-7612 (fax)

[www.youth-project.org](http://www.youth-project.org)

- Sponsors community groups for teens and young adults with disabilities
- Provides information on adult disability services
- Trains teens and young adults to explore advocacy opportunities

# DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Some agencies and organizations provide services to teens and young adults with disabilities that meet specific requirements. These agencies and organizations may be able to assist you in becoming a successful adult.

## **Department on Disability Services**

1125 15th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 730-1700 (voice)

Web page: <http://dds.dc.gov>

The District of Columbia Department on Disability Services (DDS) is responsible for providing services and supports to DC residents with disabilities that meet program requirements.

The Department on Disability Services has two parts:

- The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) (formerly MRDDA)
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) (vocational rehabilitation)

### **The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)**

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is responsible for the oversight and coordination of all services and supports provided to all qualified persons with developmental disabilities in the District of Columbia. Developmental disabilities include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, autism and other disabilities that occur during childhood.

DDA provides services and supports to individuals with disabilities and their families based on their own needs and goals. Individuals who receive services complete an intake screening to make sure they meet program requirements. When an individual is qualified to receive services and supports from DDA, a team of people including the person with developmental disabilities has a meeting to write a plan to help the person with developmental disabilities reach his or her goals. **This plan is called an Individual Support Plan or ISP**, and should be updated at least once a year to add and change goals.

## **Examples of DDA Services and Supports**

DDA works with many community agencies and service providers to offer:

- ✓ Training and Employment Support
- ✓ Support in Homes and Apartments (for adults)
- ✓ Temporary relief for families supporting someone with disabilities
- ✓ Other services and supports to help persons with developmental disabilities.

### **Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)**

810 First Street, NE

9<sup>th</sup> Floor

(202) 442-8400 [Monday -- Friday 8:15 am until 4:45 pm] (voice)

(202) 442-8613 or (202) 442-8563 (TTY)

Spanish speaking persons, please call (202) 442-8561

The Rehabilitation Services Administration's (RSA) provides job preparation services designed to assist persons with getting a job. These services include:

- Counseling and guidance
- Assessment services
- Physical restoration
- Vocational training
- Job search and placement,
- Job retention services

To be eligible for RSA services, you must have:

- A physical and/or mental disability that is preventing you from having job.
- Require RSA services to prepare for, enter, or maintain employment and/or live independently.

RSA also manages the Social Security Disability Determination Program that decides claims for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

## **Department of Mental Health**

64 New York Avenue, NE, 4th Floor

Washington, DC 20002

(202) 442-4202 (voice)

Webpage: <http://dmh.dc.gov>

The Department of Mental Health's goal is to deliver mental health services that promote a patient's full recovery, respect cultural and linguistic diversity, and are choice-driven. The Mental Health Rehabilitation Services (MHRS) system for community-based care offers:

- Evaluation and or screening services
- Case management
- Counseling
- Intensive day treatment
- Crisis or emergency services
- Rehabilitation programs
- Psychiatric Treatment
- Specialized Mental Health Services

If you are eligible for these services, you will be asked to select a Community Service Agency. Community Services Agencies are organizations responsible for providing support services to District residents needing mental health services. Fees for services are determined on a sliding scale basis. No one will be turned away because of inability to pay.

### **DMH Access Help Line**

1 (888) 7WE-HELP or 1 (888) 793-4356 (voice operates 24 / 7)

The DMH Access Help Line is the best way to access mental health rehabilitation services and its certified mental health service providers. Mental health professionals staff this 24-hour telephone line.

Call the Access Help Line to:

- Get help with solving problems
- Share concerns
- Obtain emergency services
- Decide whether to seek mental health or other types of services

## **Office on Disability Rights**

441 4th Street, NW, Suite 729 North

Washington, DC 20001

(202) 724-5055 (voice)

(202) 727-3363 (TTY)

Webpage: <http://odr.dc.gov>

The Office of Disability Rights (ODR) ensures that programs, services, benefits, and activities operated or funded by the District of Columbia are fully accessible to, and persons with disabilities. ODR is responsible for oversight of the District's obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as other federal and local disability rights laws.

The ODR provides the following services to the District of Columbia government and persons with disabilities.

- ADA Compliance
- ADA Training
- Discrimination Complaints and Investigations

## **National Rehabilitation Hospital**

102 Irving Street NW

Washington, DC 20010

(202) 877-1000 (voice)

National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) specializes in treating teens and young adults with physical disabilities. NRH offers a wide range of clinics and rehabilitative services including driver's education for persons with disabilities. NRH offers inpatient and outpatient treatment for the following conditions:

- Spinal Cord Injuries
- Head Injuries
- Cerebral Palsy
- Stroke
- Amputation
- Muscular Dystrophy

**Lifeline Partnership, Inc.**

309 E Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001

(202) 628-4819 (voice)

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

Lifeline Partnership is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization for persons with developmental disabilities and their families, based at First Trinity Lutheran Church in Washington, DC. Its mission is to provide nurture and support to persons with developmental disabilities and their families, helping people with disabilities to thrive spiritually and socially.

## GETTING A REAL JOB

Most teens and young adults with disabilities think about future employment opportunities after they leave school. Planning for a career while in school and writing employment goals in your IEP should help you in getting a job. Consider the following activities:

1. Look at the Worksheets you completed at the front of this book.
2. Talk with your family, teachers, friends and an **employment specialist** or someone who helps people find jobs about opportunities that may be available you. Invite this group to a meeting to talk about resources available to you.
3. Ask someone to help write and edit your resume. A **resume** is a list of your experiences and education that is sent to an employer.
4. Consider what supports, equipment, or services you may need to get a job. If you will need accommodations or support to be successful, think about how to meet those needs. The Rehabilitation Services Administration may be able to assist you with accommodations related to your disability.
5. Let everyone know that you are looking for employment. Networking with others may lead you to job opportunities.
6. Be patient! Finding employment takes time. Stay focused on looking for the job that is right for you.

# EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

## Department of Employment Services

609 H Street, NE

Washington, DC 20002

(202) 724-7000 (voice)

(202) 698-4817 (TTY)

Web page: <http://does.dc.gov>

The Department of Employment Services (DOES) provides a wide variety of services to job seekers through its One-Stop Career Centers. A vocational rehabilitation counselor who works for the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is also available at the One-Stop Career Centers. Please note that in order to receive services from an Employment Specialist at the One-Stop Career Center, job seekers must complete an assessment that includes a reading test. Residents who test below an eighth grade reading level will be referred to other agencies for assistance.

The District of Columbia has two full service One-Stop Career Centers.

### Franklin Street One-Stop Career Center

1500 Franklin St, NE

Washington, DC 20018

(202) 724-7000 (voice)

(202) 576-8128 (TTY)

### Naylor Road One-Stop Career Center

2626 Naylor Road, SE

Washington, DC 20020

(202) 724-7000 (voice)

(202) 645-0019 (TTY)

The following services are available at the One-Stop Career Centers:

- ✓ Job announcements
- ✓ Resources to write a resume
- ✓ Referrals to job training and placement programs
- ✓ Computers with internet access

## **Goodwill of Greater Washington (GGW)**

2200 South Dakota Avenue, NE

Washington, DC 20018

(202) 715-2624 (voice)

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

Goodwill assists teens and young adults with disabilities to:

- Identify their experiences and dreams
- Develop individual career plans.
- Conduct job searches,
- Write resumes,
- Practice interviewing skills

After you find employment, GGW staff regularly consults with you to assess your progress and determine the need for additional services.

## **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT & DAY PROGRAMS**

If you will need ongoing support to be successful with a job, consider **supported employment**. Supported employment provides extra supervision and assistance to employees with disabilities.

Other options are available to persons with disabilities include **day programs**. Day programs serve individuals who want to get out and be a part of the community. Day programs do not focus on jobs or employment.

DDA provides supported employment opportunities for young adults with developmental disabilities.

### **Developmental Disabilities Administration**

1125 15th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 730-1700 (voice)

The following organizations work with DDA to provide day programs and supported employment services in the District of Columbia.

### **Saint John's Community Services**

4835 Reservoir Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 333-2906 (voice)

St. John's Community Services assists teens and young adults with developmental and other disabilities with securing employment in their chosen career fields. Services include:

- Vocational assessments
- Job training
- Job development
- Coaching to help you maintain employment.

### **Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute**

801 Buchanan Street, NE

Washington, DC 20017

202-529-7600 (voice)

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

The Kennedy Institute works with teens and young adults with developmental disabilities to provide a broad array of education, therapeutic, employment, and community living programs.

### **Art Enables**

65 Eye Street, SW

Washington, DC 20024

(202) 554-9455 (voice)

[info@art-enables.org](mailto:info@art-enables.org)

Art Enables is an arts-and-enterprise program for teens and young adults with developmental and/or mental disabilities from throughout DC. If you become an Art Enables participant:

- You come to the studio on scheduled days to create and market your own art under the guidance of professional artist-instructors
- Your artwork is exhibited and sold in shows at the studio via retailers around the city and at galleries, markets, and special events throughout the region.

### **The Art and Drama Therapy Institute**

327 S Street, NE

Washington, DC 20002

(202) 635-1576 (voice)

The Art and Therapy Drama Institute's (ADTI) goal is to enable teens and young adults to discover and develop their unique talents, skills, and strengths.

ADTI's day treatment program also includes activities that encourage teens and young adults to obtain skills, abilities, self-worth, dignity and independence.

**WVSA Arts Connection**

1100 16th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 296-9100 (voice)  
(202) 261-0201 (TTY)

WVSA arts connection serves youth with disabilities through service-oriented programs using the arts as a tool to master educational, vocational, and other life skills.

**United Cerebral Palsy of Washington, DC and Northern Virginia**

3135 8th Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
(202) 269-1500 (voice)

United Cerebral Palsy of Washington, DC and Northern Virginia operates a prevocational day treatment program for young adults with developmental disabilities.

# TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Transportation services are critical for you to get around the community. The following transportation services are available to you.

## **Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)**

600 5th Street, NW

(202) 637-7000 (voice)

(202) 638-3780 (TTY)

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

The WMATA also called Metro is the major public transportation provider. Metro has two main transit systems.

- Metro Bus
- Metro Rail

The following telephone numbers are available to assist persons with disabilities to use WMATA's services:

ADA Programs .....	202-962-1100 (voice)
	202-962-2033 (TTY)
Customer assistance.....	202-637-1328 (voice)
Comments, complaints and commendations	
Open weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.	
Elevator outages / Metrorail	
service disruptions.....	202-962-1212 (voice)
Elevator outages/Metrorail	
shuttle service.....	202-962-1825 (voice)
Fare distribution and sales .....	202-962-5722 (voice)
Lost and Found .....	202-962-1195 (voice)
Metrorail parking .....	202-962-1066 (voice)
Transit police (emergency).....	202-962-2121 (voice)

## **Accessibility Contacts**

Reduced fare program .....	202-962-1558 (voice) 202-962-2033 (TTY)
Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee .....	202-962-2504 (voice) 202-962-2033 (TTY)
Lift-equipped Metrobuses .....	202-962-1825 (voice) 202-638-3780 (TTY)

## **Metro Access Paratransit Service**

MetroAccess .....	301-562-5360 (voice) 301-588-7535 (TTY) 800-523-7009 (voice)
MetroAccess complaints .....	202-637-0128 (voice) 202-962-2565 (TTY) 202-638-3780 (TTY)

MetroAccess is the name of the ADA para transit service for the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. MetroAccess is sponsored by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), local governments, and the other local fixed-route transit systems in the metropolitan area. Only teen and young adult riders who meet the criteria specified by the ADA and who have been certified as eligible can use MetroAccess. Eligibility is based on your functional limitations.

# Healthcare Worksheet

Families, teens and young adults with disabilities often face many challenges in obtaining healthcare. The following worksheet is designed to assist you in working with the healthcare system.

How I would describe my disability or condition using both medical and simple terms:

---

---

---

---

---

Name of someone I trust to help me talk about my disability or condition:

---

List of prescription and non-prescription medications and vitamin supplements I take on a daily or as needed basis:

---

---

---

---

---

I have the following allergies:

---

---

---

## Medical History Table

	Major Illness or Surgery	Date	Where Treated
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			

# HEALTHCARE RESOURCES

Healthcare insurance is critical for teens and young adults with disabilities and several programs exist to help you obtain medical insurance.

## Medicaid or Medical Assistance

Medicaid or Medical Assistance is a federally funded program that is part of the District of Columbia Department of Health. DC Medical Assistance provides free health insurance to persons with disabilities that meet low-income rules. The insurance pays for:

- Doctor visits
- Prescription drugs
- Hospital bills

You **do not** need to be a U.S. citizen to be eligible. Some immigrants are eligible. In order to make sure that you qualify for Medical Assistance, you will need to provide the following items:

- Proof of income (pay stubs and/or benefit statements)
- Proof of assets or how much money you have (bank statements)
- Proof you live in DC (rent receipts, ID card or utility bill)
- Proof of your Social Security Number (Social Security Card or paper from the Social Security Administration (SSA) with your number)

Even if your income is too high for the insurance, you may still qualify if you have high medical bills. This is called a “**spend down.**” To learn more about these rules, call the Income Maintenance Administration (IMA) at **(202) 724-5506**. To learn more about the Medicaid eligibility requirements or to obtain a Medicaid application, contact any of the following Income Maintenance Administration Offices:

Anacostica: 2100 Martin Luther King Avenue SE (202) 645-4614 (voice)

Congress Heights: 4001 South Capitol Street SE (202) 645-4525 (voice)

Eckington:..... 51 N Street NE (202) 724-8720 (voice)

Fort Davis: ..... 3851 Alabama Avenue SE (202) 645-4500 (voice)

H Street: ..... 645 H Street NE (202) 698-3450 (voice)

Taylor Street: ..... 1207 Taylor Street NW (202) 576-8000 (voice)

Northeast: ..... 3917 Minnesota Avenue NE (202) 724-7900 (voice)

## Healthy Families Insurance Program

DC Healthy Families  
645 H Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 698-4200 (voice)

DC Healthy Families is a free health insurance program administered by the Department of Health. DC Healthy Families is for:

- Families with teens under age 19
- Pregnant women who live in the District of Columbia.
- Youth who are under the age of 19 and live alone

There are certain income eligibility requirements. Please contact the Healthy Families Office at the number given above.

Applications are available at:

- CVS
- Safeway
- Rite Aid
- Giant stores
- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Department of Employment Services offices
- Libraries in the District.
- You can also call the 1 (888) 557-1116 (voice) help line to have an application mailed to you.

In order to complete an application you must provide the following documents:

- ✓ Proof of DC residency
- ✓ Copies of Social Security cards for children and parents who are applying
- ✓ Proof of one month's income

## DC Healthcare Alliance

For District of Columbia residents who age 19 to 65 who are not eligible for Medicaid, have no other health insurance and meet certain income limits [DC Healthcare Alliance](#) may provide **free** or low cost coverage if you meet low-income levels.

DC Healthcare Alliance will provide:

- Preventive Care (checkups, diet and nutrition)
- Health screenings (tests)
- Prescription drugs
- Dental services (cleanings or fillings)
- Family planning services (birth control)
- Urgent and emergency care (emergency room)
- Immunizations (shots)
- Prenatal care (pregnancy)
- Well child care (checkups for children)
- Wellness programs (eating well and staying healthy)
- Hospital care (medical, surgical, and GYN)

To apply for this program you must fill out an application at one of the following enrollment centers:

Enrollment Center	Address
DC General	1900 Massachusetts Avenue SE
Greater Southeast Hospital	1310 Southern Avenue SE
Congress Heights Clinic	3720 M.L. King Jr. Avenue SE
Anacostia Clinic	1328 W Street SE
Hunt Place Clinic	4130 Hunt Place NE
Woodridge Clinic	2146 24th Place NE
Walker-Jones Clinic	1100 First Street NW
Southwest Community Center	850 Delaware Avenue SW

# BENEFITS FROM THE GOVERNMENT

## **Social Security Administration**

General Information

1-800 772-1213 (voice)

1-800 325-0778 (TTY)

Website: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

The Social Security Administration is responsible for two major programs that provide benefits or money based on disability:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

## **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides monthly payments to persons with disabilities that meet Social Security requirements. Here are some facts to remember about SSI:

- SSI payments are made to persons who are blind or have disabilities and have limited income and resources
- Persons who receive payments must meet living arrangement requirements
- Individuals who receive payments are able to get payments according to Social Security rules and policies
- Social Security will review your disability from time to time to make sure you meet requirements of the SSI program.
- Paid for with US Treasury money.

## SSI Payments For Youth and Teens Under 18

If you are under the age of 18, your family may be able to receive SSI payments if you and your family meet the following rules and policies according to Social Security:

- ✓ Your disability or disabilities meet Social Security's definition of a disability for a person under the age of 18.
- ✓ Your income and resources and the income and resources of the family members that are a part of your household meet the income requirements of the SSI program.

If Social Security decides that you are able to receive SSI payments before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Social Security will assign a **Representative Payee** to help manage your money and pay for your basic living expenses and needs. A parent, family member or other caregiver may be representative payee.

### What Happens to my SSI Payments When I Turn Age 18?

After your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Social Security will review your disability, income and resources using SSI rules and policies that are part of the SSI program for adults. As you complete this review, keep these things in mind:

- Social Security will review your medical condition using the adult disability rules to decide if you have a disability. This review should happen within one year of your birthday.
- Social Security no longer looks at the income and resources of family members when deciding if you meet the financial rules for the SSI program. Social Security only considers your income and resources.
- If you were not able to receive SSI payments before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday because your family made too much money. You may now be able to get SSI payments. After your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Social Security only considers your income and resources.
- Social Security will use the adult definition of disability to decide if you are still able to get SSI payments. This definition of disability is based on your ability to work. Sometimes you may be able to

get SSI payments under the child's rules for a disability and not meet the rules and policies for the adult SSI program. Make sure that you give Social Security any information they request about your medical condition and doctors that have treated your disability.

### **SSI Employment Support Programs for Young Adults**

- If you are younger than age 22 and a student who regularly attends school, Social Security excludes even more of your earnings each month. These limits change each year contact Social Security to find out the current limit.
- With a Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS), a person who is age 15 or older can save some income and resources to pay for education and other things needed to be able to work. Social Security does not count the saved income when they figure your income for SSI purposes. They do not count the saved income and resources when they figure the amount of your SSI payment.
- Because of a medical condition(s), you may need certain items and services in order to work, such as a wheelchair or a personal assistant. When figuring your SSI payment, Social Security will not count some or the entire amount paid for these items and services in your earnings.
- You may be able to may get help with rehabilitation and training.
- Medicaid coverage will continue even if your earnings are high enough to stop the monthly SSI payment, as long as the earnings are under a certain amount.

## **SSI and Overpayments**

An **overpayment** occurs when Social Security decides that your monthly SSI payment was more money than you should have received. If Social Security decides that they sent you too much money, they will send you a letter telling you about the overpayment. Social Security will let you know how the overpayment occurred. Usually, you will have to pay the amount of the overpayment back to Social Security. If you receive a letter about an SSI overpayment:

- Remain calm and contact Social Security immediately. (See number below.)
- If you cannot pay the entire amount back right away, Social Security will set up a monthly payment plan or reduce your monthly SSI payment.
- If you have a payment plan set up, make your payments on time. Contact Social Security if you cannot make a payment. (See number below.)

## **SSI Payments and Appeals**

If Social Security makes a decision about your SSI payments that you do not agree with, you can **appeal** or ask Social Security to look at their decision again. When you ask for an appeal, Social Security will look at the entire decision, even those parts that were in your favor. If their decision was wrong, Social Security will change it. There are four levels of the Social Security Appeals Process:

**Reconsideration** – The first stage of the appeals process. A reconsideration is a complete review of your claim by someone who did not take part in the first decision. Social Security will look at all the information submitted when the original decision was made, plus any new information to be considered.

**Hearing** - The second stage of the appeals process. If you disagree with the reconsideration decision, you may ask for a hearing. An administrative law judge who had no part in the first decision or the reconsideration of your case will conduct the hearing. The hearing is usually held within 75 miles of your home. The administrative law judge will notify you of the time and place of the hearing. You and your representative, if you have one, may come to the hearing and explain your case in person. You may look at the information in your file and give new information. The administrative law judge will question you and any witnesses you bring to the hearing. Other witnesses, such as medical or vocational experts, may give Social Security information at the hearing. You or your representative also may question the witnesses. It is usually to your advantage to attend the hearing. If you do not wish to do so, you must tell Social Security in writing that you do not want to attend.

**Appeals Council** - If you disagree with the hearing decision, you may ask for a review by Social Security's Appeals Council. Social Security will be glad to help you ask for this review. The Appeals Council looks at all requests for review, but it may deny a request if it believes the hearing decision was correct. If the Appeals Council decides to review your case, it will either decide your case itself or return it to an administrative law judge for further review. If the Appeals Council denies your request for review, Social Security will send you a letter explaining the denial.

**Federal Court** - If you disagree with the Appeals Council's decision or if the Appeals Council decides not to review your case, you may file a lawsuit in a federal district court. The letter Social Security sends you about the Appeals Council's action also will tell you how to ask a court to look at your case.

## **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) also provides monthly payments to eligible persons with disabilities. Here are some facts to remember about SSDI:

- SSDI is financed with taxes paid by workers, employers, and self-employed persons
- Workers earn a certain number of credits based on taxable work to be able to get SSDI payments according to Social Security
- The amount of monthly disability benefits is based on the worker's Social Security earnings record

### **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits for adults with disabilities since childhood (prior to age 22)**

The SSDI program pays benefits to adults who have a disability that began before they became 22 years old. Social Security considers this SSDI benefit as a "child's" benefit because it is paid on a parent's Social Security earnings record. For a disabled adult to become entitled to this "child" benefit, one of his or her parents:

- ✓ Must be receiving Social Security retirement or disability benefits;  
or
- ✓ Must have died and have worked long enough under Social Security.

These benefits are also payable to an adult who received dependents benefits on a parent's Social Security earnings record prior to age 18, if he or she is disabled at age 18. Social Security makes the disability decision using the disability rules for adults.

SSDI disabled adult "child" benefits continue as long as the individual remains disabled. Your child does not need to have worked to get these benefits.

### **How Social Security Decides If You Can Receive SSDI Benefits**

If you are age 18 or older, Social Security will evaluate your disability the same way they would evaluate the disability for any adult. Social Security sends the application to the Disability Determination Services in the District to complete the application.

## **SSDI Employment Support Programs for Young Adults**

- An adult disabled before age 22 can get the same help with work expenses explained above for an SSI child, and help with rehabilitation and training.
- Cash benefits may continue until the individual can work on a regular basis.
- Medicare may continue for up to 93 months (seven years, nine months).

## **SSDI and Overpayments**

An **overpayment** occurs when Social Security decides that your monthly SSDI payment was more money than you should have received. If Social Security decides that they sent you too much money, they will send you a letter telling you about the overpayment. Social Security will let you know how the overpayment occurred. Usually, you will have to pay the amount of the overpayment back to Social Security. If you receive a letter about an SSDI overpayment:

- Remain calm and contact Social Security immediately. (See number below.)
- If you cannot pay the entire amount back right away, Social Security will set up a monthly payment plan or reduce your monthly SSDI payment.
- If you have a payment plan set up, make your payments on time. Contact Social Security if you cannot make a payment. (See number below.)

## **Resources and Local Social Security Administration Offices**

Unfortunately, it is impossible to provide all of the information you may need in this book. The Social Security Administration has a toll free telephone number 1-800 772-1213. If you have access to the Internet, many resources are available on the Social Security website [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). The District of Columbia has several local offices. If you have questions or concerns you may want to visit one of the offices listed below. You may want to call ahead and make an appointment so that you can avoid a long wait at the local office. If visit the local office, bring these items with you:

- ✓ Picture Identification Card or Driver's License
- ✓ Social Security Card
- ✓ Letters you have received from Social Security

### **Local Social Security Offices**

1. M Street Office  
2100 M Street, NW  
(202) 653-5040 (voice)  
(202) 653-2035 (voice)
2. Postal Plaza (Brentwood)  
1905-B 9th Street, NE  
(202) 376-5049 (voice)  
(202) 233-2012 (voice)
3. Anacostia  
2041 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE Suite 130  
(202) 755-0672 (voice)  
(202) 755-0630 (voice)
4. Shepard Park  
7820 Eastern Avenue, NW  
(202) 673-5159 (voice)  
(202) 673-5168 (voice)

## **Advocacy Resources for Social Security Benefits**

Archdiocesan Legal Network of Catholic Charities  
924 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 628-4263 English (voice)  
(202) 772-4265 Spanish (voice)

Bread for the City Legal Clinic NW  
1525 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 265-2400 (voice)

Bread for the City Legal Clinic SE  
1640 Good Hope Road SE  
Washington, 20020  
(202) 561-8587 (voice)

George Washington University Public Justice Law Clinic  
(202) 994-7463 (voice)

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia  
666 11<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 628-1161 (voice)

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia – SE Intake  
1901 Mississippi Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
(202) 463-3077 (voice)

## **WILL I LOSE MY BENEFITS IF I GO TO WORK?**

Teens and young adults with disabilities are often concerned that they may lose cash benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) if they go to work. If you receive cash benefits from the Social Security Administration, including SSI, SSDI, Medicaid or Medicare, going to work may affect your benefits. However, the government has work incentive programs to help you keep these benefits while earning an income. Endependence Center offers free and private benefits planning and review to help you make informed choices.

### **Work Incentives Planning and Assistance**

Endependence Center

6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd.

Norfolk, Virginia. 23502

1-866-323-1088 (voice)

Note this agency serves the District of Columbia, even though it is located in Norfolk, Virginia.

# HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES

Teens and young adults often look forward to the day when they will leave the family home and obtain their own place. Many adults with disabilities live in Washington, DC independently or with a variety of community based supports.

## Moving to Your Own Place

Moving to your own apartment when you have been living at home is a huge step to becoming more independent. If you are thinking about moving out on your own here are some things to consider:

- ❑ Sources of steady income (about one third to half of your monthly income will be used for rent)
- ❑ Ability to manage personal care and housework
- ❑ Consider moving in with a roommate to help with expenses and chores
- ❑ Think about supports and services that you may need to live on your own

## Searching for an Apartment

Searching for an apartment or place to live can be exciting. Remember the following:

- Develop a budget and know how much money you can afford to pay for rent
- Save money for your security deposit and first month's rent. A **security deposit** is a fee a landlord can charge to pay for damages to an apartment when you leave. If your apartment has no damages, you can get this money back when you move to a new home.
- Think what your apartment will need to have to work for you. For example: Do you need wheelchair access or to be close to the bus stop or Metro rail station?
- Check newspaper ads and apartment guidebooks for available apartments
- Dress neat and clean when you visit a rental office
- Take your photo identification or driver's license with you

## Housing Rights

**The Fair Housing Act** makes it illegal to discriminate or make housing unavailable because of the following:

- Disability
- Religion
- Gender
- National origin
- Family status
- Race or color

If an apartment building has four or more units and it was built after March 13, 1991, the building has to meet the following construction requirements for all ground level construction and apartments that are accessible using an elevator:

1. An accessible building entrance on an accessible route
2. Accessible common and public use areas
3. Usable doors (usable by a person in a wheelchair).
4. Accessible route into and through the dwelling unit
5. Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls in accessible locations
6. Reinforced walls in bathrooms for later installation of grab bars
7. Usable kitchens and bathrooms

The Fair Housing Act also allows persons with disabilities to have **reasonable accommodations** or changes of rules, policies, and practices to be able to use and enjoy their homes in ways similar to those without disabilities. The Fair Housing Act applies to both private and public housing.

If you think your rights have been abused according to the Fair Housing Act, you have up to one year to make a complaint. To file a complaint, contact the local Housing and Urban Development Field Office:

District of Columbia Field Office

820 First Street, NE,

Suite 300

Washington D.C., 20002

(202) 275-9200 (voice)

(202) 275-9212 (fax)

(202) 275-0772 (TTY)

**Office Hours:** 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

### **What to Tell Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

- Your name and address
- The name and address of the person your complaint is against (the respondent)
- The address or other identification to the housing involved
- A short description to the alleged violation (the event that caused you to believe your rights were violated)
- The date(s) to the alleged violation

### **What Happens When You File A Complaint**

HUD will notify you when it receives your complaint. Normally, HUD also will:

- Notify the alleged violator of your complaint and permit that person to submit an answer
- Investigate your complaint and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe the Fair Housing Act has been violated
- Notify you if it cannot complete an investigation within 100 days of receiving your complaint

## **Affordable Housing Resources**

### **District of Columbia Housing Authority**

1133 North Capitol Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 535-1706 (voice)

The District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) manages subsidized housing programs, with a separate waiting list for each program. These housing programs are:

- 1) Public Housing
- 2) Housing Choice Voucher-Tenant based Vouchers
- 3) Housing Choice Voucher-Moderate Rehabilitation
- 4) Project Based Vouchers.

Rental assistance is provided to low-income teens, young adults, and families through each housing program, and the assistance is based on household income. For complete details on these housing programs and renting assistance, contact the DCHA office.

### **Who Can Apply for Housing Assistance?**

Housing assistance is available for low - income families. Income limits are determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development each year and are available in the Client Placement Division's Client Services Center.

### **How Can I Apply For Housing Assistance?**

#### **In Person:**

Persons interested in applying can visit the Client Services Center at DCHA, Suite 138 from 8:30AM -- 3:45PM, Monday-Thursday. Applicants must provide government-issued photo identification.

To request an application, call the Client Placement Division at (202) 535-1706 (voice) from 8:15AM -- 4:45PM, Monday-Friday.

**By Mail:**

Applications may be mailed to the Client Services Center, Suite 138 at the address above. Assistance in filling out an application will be provided upon request.

**Providing Assistance for Persons With Disabilities:**

The District of Columbia Housing Authority also provides **reasonable modifications**. A reasonable modification is a change that can be made to a unit owned and operated by DCHA or procedure to allow persons with disabilities to have the same opportunity for housing as any other applicant. You may request a reasonable accommodation for assistance anytime during the application or housing process. All requests must be submitted in writing.

# Literacy & GED Resources

Teens and young adults with disabilities sometimes do not get the educational skills they need later in life. The following programs help with reading and other educational skills.

## **Adult Literacy Resource Center**

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library  
901 G Street NW, Room 300  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 727-1616 (voice)  
Literacy Helpline: (202) 727-2431 (voice)

The Adult Literacy Resource Center believes that literacy is a right, not a privilege, and encourages potential adult learners (ages 16+) to study and provides:

- High quality adult-oriented books and materials,
- Guidance in choosing materials,
- Access to computers with internet connection
- Information about adult education programs
- Referrals to adult education programs: basic reading, GED preparation, English classes, adult night school, and the External Diploma Program (another way of getting a high school diploma available at Ballou and Roosevelt Senior High Schools).
- GED Practice Test (large print version available)

## **GED Practice Test Sites**

- Adult Literacy Resource Center  
Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library  
901 G Street NW Room 300  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 727-1616 (voice)  
Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. & Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.
- Educational Opportunity Center  
1233 20th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 741-4730 (voice)

- GED Testing Center Office  
410 8<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 601,  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 274-7173 (voice)

Note: Youth between 16-18 interested in the GED Test must meet specific requirements and should call (202) 274-7173 (voice).

**DC LEARNs (D.C. Literacy Education, Advocacy and Resource Network)**

1612 K Street NW Suite 300

Washington, DC 20006

(202) 331-0141 (voice)

Read Out Loud Hotline: 1-866-READ-OUT (voice)

DC LEARNs is a nonprofit citywide coalition of organizations providing adult, family, and children's literacy services to the residents of Washington, DC. Their work includes:

- Training
- Policy work and analysis
- Pilot projects
- Volunteer recruitment
- Gathering and providing information on literacy programs

# COLLEGE & ADULT EDUCATION RESOURCES

College graduates usually earn more than high school graduates. If you show an interest in college or a special skill in any of the subjects that you studied in high school, you may want to explore college or higher education as an option.

Planning for college or technical school should start early. You and your family may want to consider setting aside savings for college using the DC College Savings Plan. This allows you to save and invest money for your student's college without having to pay taxes on it. There is also the option of loans (money you have to pay back) or grants, fellowships or scholarships (money that you do not have to pay back). In addition, most colleges have a disability office and can provide the accommodations that you need to pursue higher education.

## **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

U.S. Department of Education

800-4-FEDAID (voice)

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

There are a number of federal loan, grant and work-study programs that you may be eligible for. To apply, complete and return a FAFSA to the U.S. Department of Education or through your guidance counselor, the Greater Washington College Info Center (see below), or any college financial aid office.

## **District of Columbia College Access Program (DC CAP)**

1029 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 500

Washington, DC 20005

(202)-783-7933 (voice)

[dccapcoff@aol.com](mailto:dccapcoff@aol.com)

DC-CAP can help you see that there is a way for you to get a college education. DC-CAP helps teens and young adults: Find the appropriate college based on their individual needs; Assist with the college application process; Help secure financial aid; and Continue to provide counseling and financial aid assistance to students for up to five years of college.

## **The Greater Washington College Info Center**

MLK Jr. Memorial Library, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

901 G Street NW

Washington, DC 20001

202-393-1100 X17 (voice)

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

The College Info Center has a number of resources, including computers you can use, college information guides, and a series of education and career workshops, including “Research, Apply, Review: College Admissions 101” and “Finding the Right Resources: The College Search for Students with Learning Disabilities.” All resources and workshops are FREE.

## **DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program (DCTAG)**

202-727-6436 (voice)

[www.tuitiongrant.dc.gov](http://www.tuitiongrant.dc.gov)

The DCTAG is available to District of Columbia residents only. For young adults who qualify and graduated from high school on or after January 1, 1998, the program provides a grant to attend a public or private college or university nationwide. This grant allows District residents to pay the state’s low in-state rate, though they are attending an out-of-state institution. Or, a District resident may receive \$2,500 per year toward tuition at a historically black institution nationwide or at a private college or university in the DC metropolitan area.

## **DC College Savings Plan**

PO Box 11466

Washington, DC 20008

800-987-4859 DC Residents (voice)

800-541-1524 (TTY)

[www.dc529.com](http://www.dc529.com)

The DC College Savings Plan can help you start saving right now for post-secondary education. The plan allows you to save and invest money that is tax-deferred and federal tax-free (if you use it for qualified post-secondary education expenses only).

**University of the District of Columbia**

Disability Support Services Office

4200 Connecticut Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20008

(202) 274.6152 (voice)

The University of the District of Columbia (UDC) is an urban land grant institution. UDC is a comprehensive public institution offering affordable post-secondary degrees at the associates, baccalaureate, and graduate levels. The Disability Supports Services Offices provides accommodations and assistance to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. Students will also need to provide recent documentation of their disability and recent testing and evaluations of their disability.

**ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC)**

The Council for Exceptional Children

1110 N. Glebe Rd.

Arlington, VA 22201-5704

Toll Free: 1.800.328.0272 (voice)

<http://ericec.org/digests/e620.html>

This site has an information sheet titled, "Selecting A College for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder," which is helpful as an overview to transition planning from high school to college.

## **Information for Students Considering College or Trade School**

Attending a college, university, or vocational school is a major life decision for any student. If you are a student who has a significant disability, this decision may seem overwhelming at times. The following information is designed to help you decide if college is right for you.

### **Is College for Me?**

There are many differences between high school and college; the following list outlines some of the differences that you will find in college.

### **Why Go to College?**

- To be able to get a job that pays more money.
- All of my friends are going to college.
- To pursue a particular interest or vocational goal.
- Not really sure what I want to do with my life.
- I want to see life from a different view and have new experiences.

## **Academic Life in College**

- Less contact with instructors.
- Less individual feedback.
- More academic competition.
- Instruction is mainly by lecture.
- Independent reading assignments in addition to lectures.
- Classes meet less often and for fewer hours.
- An entire course is completed in 16 weeks or less.
- New and increased social pressures.
- Using the library effectively is more important.
- Students are responsible for what they learned in high school.
- More emphasis on understanding theory.

## **Grading In College**

- ✓ Harder work is required for an A or B; C is an average grade.
- ✓ Semester grades may be based on just two or three test scores.
- ✓ Exam questions may be more difficult to predict.
- ✓ More major writing assignments.
- ✓ Essay exams are more common.

## **Learning in College**

- Comprehension skills are more important.
- Taking good notes is important.
- Being able to identify main ideas is more important.
- Effective communication skills are more important.
- Students are responsible for keeping track of their own progress and are responsible for recognizing the need for getting additional help.
- Paying attention in class is more important.
- Studying is more important.

## **Support in College**

- No resource room; student must be independent and responsible for seeking assistance.
- Behavior problems are not tolerated.
- More students on campus.
- More social activities.
- Environment may be impersonal.

## **Stress In College**

- Increased workload and faster pace.
- It is more difficult to earn high grades.
- Students are expected to know what they want from college, classes, life, etc.
- Students need to be able to juggle assignments, job responsibilities, family responsibilities, plus any sports, activities, etc.

## **Responsibility in College**

- Students are more independent and are accountable for their behavior both in class and out, including dorms and extracurricular activities.
- Increased number of choices and decisions to be made.
- More self-evaluation and accepting responsibility.
- More independent reading and studying are required.
- Students are responsible for time management.
- Students establish and attain their own goals.
- Students are more responsible to whoever is paying for their education.
- Students must be motivated to succeed.
- Students are responsible for independently completing assignments and handing them in on time.

## **Laws Protecting the Rights of Adult Students with Disabilities**

The following federal laws protect the rights of adult students with disabilities:

### **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA):**

A federal civil rights law that states public or private institutions cannot discriminate on the basis of disability. It helps to implement and enforce Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and also outlines additional protections for people with disabilities.

### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:**

A federal civil rights law that prohibits any organization that receives money from the federal government from discriminating on the basis of a disability.

### **Limits to the Law and Personal Responsibility**

Students with disabilities are required to meet the same college admissions and academic requirements as students without disabilities. These laws are designed to protect the student's civil rights to attend and participate equally with students who do not have disabilities. The law does not specify or require a college to provide a particular accommodation nor does the law consider what would be the best learning environment for a particular student.

## **Disability Support Services**

Disability Support Services is a college service that provides advocacy and arranges for academic support and campus accessibility for students with disabilities. Depending on the individual college, this service may have a different name, such as Disabled Student Services or Educational Access or Special Needs. To receive services, a person with a disability must place a request with the Disability Support Services office and provide documentation regarding the disability.

### **Disability Support Services Coordinator**

The Disability Support Services Coordinator is an employee of the college who assists students with disabilities by ensuring equal access.

Based on appropriate disability documentation provided by the student, he or she ascertains eligibility for classroom accommodations and works with students and instructors to ensure those accommodations are provided. The Disability Support Services Coordinator may:

- ✓ Meet with a student who requests accommodations for a disability;
- ✓ Review the student's disability documentation to identify accommodations the student is eligible to receive;
- ✓ Prepare a written accommodations plan, an agreement between the student and college outlining the accommodations that will be provided;
- ✓ Coordinate and ensure the accommodation plan is in place;
- ✓ Work with college faculty, administrators and staff as an advocate and provide support to all parties in the accommodations process;
- ✓ Educate the student about his or her role and responsibility as a self-advocate in the accommodations process.

## **When to Contact the Disability Services Coordinator**

Acquiring information about Disability Support Services and how services are delivered at different schools can be helpful in determining which school will best fit a student's needs. Having a discussion about this with Disability Support Services Coordinators prior to applying to schools can help students with this decision.

Once admitted to a college, a meeting with the Disability Services Coordinator to arrange for services must be scheduled. Since some accommodations such as tape-recorded texts, arranging for readers, scribes and sign language interpreters may require time to coordinate, it is best to schedule this meeting at least eight weeks in advance.

## **Taking a Serious Look at College and Disability Support Services**

When you think about if college is for you consider the following information:

When a student with a disability enters college, he or she becomes responsible for working with the college to accommodate any support services related to his or her disability. The following activities are recommended so that students can prepare to work with the Disability Support Services Coordinator while in college.

Learn about the requirements and demands of college course work. Consider these activities:

- Ask to visit a class at the college.
- Get a course catalogue and look at program and degree requirements.
- Pay attention to admissions policies, requirements and deadlines.

Visit the college bookstore and look through a textbook for a freshman level course. Take a look at:

- The number of pages
- How long it takes you to read a page
- The length of a chapter
- The use of pictures, illustrations and study aids
- The difficulty of the vocabulary
- The length of sentences
- If reading is difficult due to your disability, think about how you could get the information in the book.

Learn about the range of services and supports available to students with disabilities at the college. Colleges offer different services and supports to students with disabilities. These services and supports are designed to allow the student with a disability to participate equally in a course with students who do not have disability. Students with disabilities are given an equal opportunity to succeed or fail. The student with a disability still needs to meet all admission and course requirements for their area of study.

In order to request a disability related accommodation, a student must do the following:

- Identify yourself to the Disability Support Services Office as being a student with a disability who needs an accommodation in order to participate equally in a course.
- Provide documentation (medical records or recent reports of tests about your disability) of your disability to the Disability Support Services for your college. This documentation should be given to the Disability Support Services office only. Do not include disability related documentation as part of your college admissions package.

## **Things to Remember About Requesting an Accommodation**

- A college is not required to provide a specific requested support or accommodation. For example, you may request a textbook on audiotape and the college may decide to provide you with a reader. Because you could obtain needed information from a reader, it would be legal for the college to make this decision.
- If you have recently graduated from high school, request a copy of any tests that are related to your disability. You may be able to save time or money by providing your high school testing records to the Disability Support Services Office.
- If you are receiving services from Rehabilitation Services Administration, request that testing records be sent to the Disability Support Services Office.
- The Disability Support Services Office may request more documentation regarding your disability. You may need to pay for further testing to document your disability. Testing can be expensive, and it may not be covered by health insurance.
- Accommodations are designed to allow the student with a disability to participate in a course or program. In other words, students with disabilities are given an equal opportunity to succeed or fail.

# ADVOCACY RESOURCES

The following organizations provide information about the laws protecting the civil rights of teens and young adults with disabilities.

## **University Legal Services**

Protection and Advocacy Program

201 I Street NE

Washington, DC 20002

(202) 547-0198 (voice)

(202) 547-2662 (fax)

(202) 547-2657 (TTY)

University Legal Services (ULS) is a private, non-profit organization that provides legal advocacy for the human, legal and service rights of people with disabilities in the District of Columbia. All services are offered free of charge to eligible individuals in accordance with ULS' available resources and policies. Services provided include:

- ✓ Information and referral to community resources
- ✓ Education and training about legal rights
- ✓ Investigation of reported or suspected instances of abuse or neglect
- ✓ Legal counsel; technical assistance, and litigation services
- ✓ Technical assistance regarding legislative and policy concerns.

## **DC Center for Independent Living, Inc. (DCCIL)**

1400 Florida Avenue, NE

Washington, DC 20002

202-388-0033 (voice)

202-388-0277 (TTY)

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

The DCCIL is managed by and for persons with a variety of disabilities. The DCCIL is a community based, private non-profit organization that promotes independent life styles for persons with significant disabilities in the District of Columbia. DCCIL has four core independent living services:

- (1) Independent living skills training,
- (2) Peer counseling,
- (3) Advocacy and legal services,
- (4) Information and referral to community services.

## **ADA & IT Information Center of the Mid-Atlantic Region**

451 Hungerford Drive, Suite 607

Rockville, MD 20850

800-949-4232 (voice and TTY)

[adainfo@transend.org](mailto:adainfo@transend.org)

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

The ADA and Information Technology Information Center of the Mid-Atlantic Region provides training and information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and accessible information technology (IT) to businesses, individuals with disabilities, schools, and government agencies within the Mid-Atlantic Region (PA, DE, MD, VA, WV, and DC)

## **The ARC of the District of Columbia**

817 Varnum Street, NE

Washington, DC 20017

(202) 636-2950 (voice)

The ARC of the District of Columbia provides advocacy for a variety of issues that are important to teens and young adults with developmental disabilities.

## **Quality Trust For Individuals With Disabilities**

5335 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 825

Washington, DC 20015

(202) 448-1450 (voice)

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

Quality Trust provides advocacy, monitoring, family supports and outreach activities designed to assist persons with developmental disabilities and their families.

# RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Teens and young adults with disabilities can enjoy a wide variety of recreational activities in Washington, DC. The resources listed below specialize in offering social and recreational opportunities for you.

## **DC Center for Therapeutic Recreation**

### **DC Parks and Recreation**

3030 G Street SE

Washington, DC 20019

(202) 698-1794 (voice)

(202) 645 - 5118 (TTY)

Therapeutic recreation programs and services are offered to both District residents and non-residents with or without disabilities. Classes include:

- Aromatherapy
- Spring break camp
- Weight training
- Water exercise and water sports

## **DC Disability Guide**

### **DC Center for Independent Living, Inc.**

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

This on-line guide offers a wide range of resources from finding personal attendants to accessible restaurants and apartment communities in the DC-MD-VA area.

## NATIONAL RESOURCES

Many resources are available through the Internet, and some organizations provide great information using toll free telephone numbers. The following is a list of resources that provide advice and information on a national basis.

### **National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (NCWD/Youth)**

[www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info)

NCWD/Youth is a national workforce organization that has various resources and ideas about employment for youth with disabilities and their families.

### **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**

1-800-526-7234 or 1-800-ADA-WORK (voice)

[www.jan.wvu.edu](http://www.jan.wvu.edu)

JAN is a free consulting service designed to increase employment options for people with disabilities. JAN provides recommendations to persons with disabilities and employers on how to best work with employees that have disabilities.

### **National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)**

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

NICHCY is a national information and referral center for children and youth with disabilities and the laws that impact their lives. NICHCY also includes a really helpful database with state resources and information; see "State Resources."

### **M Power Musicians for Mental Health**

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

Mpower is a new youth awareness campaign that's using the power of music to change youth attitudes about mental health and fight the stigma facing the 1 in 5 youth with mental health problems. Working with a diverse group of artists, music industry executives, mental health advocates and youth leaders, mpower is dedicated to reaching out to today's youth about a range of mental health issues to provide important resources and information to encourage those in need to seek help. Sponsored by Mental Health America and its many partners.

## **Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI)**

U Mass Boston

100 Morrissey Blvd

Boston, MA 02125

(617) 287-4342 (voice)

(617) 287-4350 (TTY)

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

ICI offers training and consultation on planning that focuses on the person with a disability, and job development activities for employment staff and job seekers. Visit their website for a wide range of job development resources, including “More Than Just a Job: Person-Centered Career Planning.”

## **Family Village**

[www.familyvillage.wisc.edu](http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu)

Family Village is an Internet community that provides information, resources, and communication opportunities on the Internet for persons with intellectual and other disabilities, for their families, and service providers.

## **National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)**

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

NCSET coordinates national resources, offers advice, and shares information related to secondary education and transition for youth with disabilities in order to create opportunities for youth to achieve successful futures.

## **Think College**

[www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)

Young adults with intellectual and/or learning disabilities have not had many chances to go to college. This website provides information and links to anyone interested in finding out more about college programs for persons with intellectual and/or learning disabilities.

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