



Preparing Students with Disabilities for Postsecondary Education

Resource Guide for Use with GEAR UP School Staff



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Introduction

This resource guide is designed to assist those who work with high school students with disabilities who plan to continue their education in postsecondary institutions, including vocational and career schools, two- and four-year colleges, and universities. Because postsecondary institutions differ significantly from high school, students with disabilities must know their rights and responsibilities and self-advocate to succeed.

The Laws

Students with disabilities need to understand their rights. Federal laws prohibit discrimination based on disability. Additionally, persons with a disability are a protected class in Washington State.

Protected Class (Discrimination Prohibited)	Federal Law	Washington State Law and Regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) • Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act • The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 28A.642 RCW - Common school provisions – Discrimination prohibition. • Chapter 392-190 WAC – Equal educational opportunity – Unlawful discrimination prohibited. • Chapter 49.60 RCW - Washington Law against Discrimination*. • OSPI and Regulations Guidelines: Prohibiting Discrimination in Washington Public Schools.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004

The **IDEA** directs federal financial assistance to state and local education agencies to guarantee that school systems provide eligible students with disabilities a **free, appropriate public education (FAPE)** in the least restrictive environment with special education and related aides and services as needed. The law governs the education of students with disabilities from preschool through high school completion or until the student reaches their twenty-second birthday.

All students determined eligible to receive special education or a Section 504 Plan are entitled to a FAPE in the least restrictive environment, which means that the parents of students with disabilities may not be charged for their child's education or related services. The educational services must be appropriate and provided per the student's IEP and/or 504 Plan. Students with disabilities are to be educated with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

Beginning at 16 (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team), the school district must invite students to attend IEP meetings whenever transition services are discussed. If a student cannot attend, the school must take other steps to consider the student's preferences and interests.

504 Eligible Students

A student eligible for services through Section 504 must:

- Have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities **or**
- Have a record of such an impairment; **or**
- Be regarded as having the impairment.

The impairment does not need to prevent or severely or significantly restrict a major life activity to be considered substantially limiting. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and "major bodily functions," such as the functions of the immune system,

normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions. For more information: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html
Source: [DSHS, Youth Transition Handbook](#)

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), patterned after **Section 504**, also protects qualified persons with disabilities from discrimination in many areas of postsecondary education, including admission, academics, and research. Although Section 504 and Title II apply to both school districts and postsecondary institutions, the responsibilities of postsecondary institutions differ significantly from those of school districts.

ADA applies to every public and private institution except those affiliated with religious organizations. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 applies to any entity that accepts federal financial assistance for any program or service. Both laws were enacted to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

Postsecondary Disability Student Services

Campus **disability services offices** ensure equal access to educational programs and services by providing consultation on accommodations (placement testing, classroom, assistive technology, and more) for students with disabilities who are otherwise qualified for college. Postsecondary institutions refer to their disability offices differently; however, the most common title is "Disability Services (DS) Office."

Because IDEA no longer covers students who graduated from high school, the rights of students with disabilities are different in college from those in high school. Unlike high school, postsecondary institutions are not required to provide FAPE. Instead, they must provide appropriate academic adjustments to ensure they do not discriminate based on disability. In addition, if a postsecondary school provides housing to nondisabled students, it must provide comparable, convenient, and accessible housing to students with disabilities at the same cost.

While colleges are required to provide accommodations to allow equal access to the curriculum (e.g., taking a test in a quiet room or having a sign-language interpreter), they are not required to provide special educational services, therapies, or curriculum modifications that fundamentally alter the nature of the program or class. However, colleges and universities routinely offer services to all students that may benefit some students with disabilities, including tutoring, personal counseling, writing coaching, health and wellness programs, study skills, and time management training.

High school students and their parents need to plan appropriately for their students' transitions to postsecondary institutions. Compared to services at public K-12 schools, the services provided by postsecondary institutions may seem minimal. To be eligible for disability-related services in college, students must have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The DS office will work closely with students to help them understand their rights. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) covers some of those rights. Please be aware that the DS Office cannot discuss a specific student's circumstances or record with anyone (including parents or guardians) without that student's permission.

Source: [Higher Education and Counselor Workshop Book](#) and [U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights](#)

Differences between High School and College

Postsecondary institutions differ significantly from high school. Understanding these differences can help students with the transition. Students with disabilities who know their rights and responsibilities are much better equipped to succeed in higher education.

Differences between High School and College	
High School	Postsecondary Education
Laws & Responsibilities	
*IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) focuses on Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), 504 (Section 504, Rehab Act, 1973), ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990).	*504 (Section 504, Rehab Act, 1973) and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990) focus on accessibility and reasonable accommodations.
Covers ages 3-21 or until regular high school diploma requirements are met.	Covers students with disabilities regardless of age; schools may not discriminate in recruitment, admission, or after admission solely based on a disability.
School attendance is mandatory.	Students decide to attend. Most likely, pay tuition.
Districts must identify students with disabilities through free assessment and the IEP process.	Students are responsible for revealing and providing current documentation of a disability. They must self-advocate.
Students receive special education and related services based on an identified disability.	Formal special education services are not available.
Services include individually designed instruction modification and accommodations based on the IEP.	Reasonable accommodations and modifications may be made to provide equal access and participation.
Individual student's needs based on the IEP may be addressed by program support for school personnel.	No formal program support for school personnel is provided.
Progress toward IEP goals is monitored and communicated to the parents/guardians and the student.	Students must monitor their progress and communicate their needs to the instructor.
Schools assist in connecting the student with community support agencies if so identified as a transition need according to the IEP.	Students are responsible for making their connections with community support agencies.
High School	Postsecondary Education
Classes	
6 hours each day, 30 hours a week are spent in class.	Approximately 12-16 hours each week are spent in class.
The average class is 35-45 minutes.	Class times vary from 50 minutes to 4 hours.
Class is usually a semester or 90 days.	Colleges have a Semester or Quarter system. Quarter systems meet approximately 11 weeks or 53-55 days. Semester systems meet for approximately 16 weeks or 90 days.
Classes are arranged.	Each student decides their schedule in consultation with an academic advisor. Schedules tend to look lighter than they are.
Classes are structured and scheduled one after the other.	There are often hours between classes; class times vary throughout the day and evening.
Classes generally have no more than 35 students.	Classes vary greatly in size and may include 100 or more students.
Classes are generally held in one building.	Classes are held at many different sites on campus.
Classes meet daily.	Classes may meet 1 to 5 times a week.
Missing classes for various reasons is permissible, and you may still complete the course.	Depending on course requirements, missing classes may result in lowered grades or failing the class.
Rigid schedule with constant supervision.	Greater flexibility of scheduling.
Students may take the same subject all year.	Students will have new classes and new textbooks every quarter/semester.
General education classes are dictated by state and district requirements.	Graduation requirements are complex and vary for different fields of study.

Textbooks are typically provided at little to no expense.	Textbooks can be expensive. According to the College Board, the average annual cost is over \$1,100.
Guidance is provided for students so they will be aware of graduation requirements.	Students know and ensure they complete graduation requirements, which are complicated and may change.
Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the IEP.	Modifications that change course outcomes will not be offered.
High School	Postsecondary Education
Instructors	
Daily contact w/ teachers and support staff.	Classes meet less frequently, impacting access to instructors and assistance. Instructors are not always available to assist the student.
Review sessions are often held before tests. Test questions are usually directed at the ability to recall what has been learned. Make-up tests are frequently available.	Students must work independently to prepare for tests. Review sessions by professors are rare. Students often must be able to apply information in new contexts. Make-up tests are unusual.
Students are usually corrected if their behavior is inappropriate.	Many moral and ethical decisions will arise. Students must take responsibility for their actions and decisions as well as the consequences they produce.
Students generally receive assignments in both written and oral form and may hand those assignments in during class time.	Students are often required to use email and the Internet for communication, class projects, submitting assignments, etc.
Teachers approach you if they believe assistance is needed.	Professors expect the student to initiate contact if assistance is needed.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Professors typically have scheduled office hours for students to attend.
Teachers closely monitor a student's progress.	Professors may not monitor a student's progress but will grade based on the student's work or may not make any effort to discuss a student's performance despite failing scores.
Teachers provide information missed if you are absent.	Professors expect students to obtain notes from their classmates if they miss class.
Teachers remind students of assignments, due dates, test dates, and incomplete work.	Professors may not remind students of incomplete work. They expect students to read, save and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected when it is due and how it will be graded.
Often write information on the board or overhead for notes.	May lecture nonstop. If they write on the board, it may be to support the lecture, not summarize it.
Teach knowledge and facts, leading students through the thinking process.	Expect students to think independently and connect seemingly unrelated information.
High School	Postsecondary Education
Studying	
Students are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed and often re-taught in class.	Students are assigned substantial reading and writing, which may not be directly addressed in class.
Instructors may review class notes and text material regularly for classes.	Students should review class notes and text material regularly.
Study time outside class may vary (maybe as little as 1-3 hours a week).	Generally, you need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour of class.
Someone is available to help plan study time (teachers, Spec Ed, parents).	Students are responsible for setting and following through on all scheduling and study time.
High School	Postsecondary Education
Testing	
The school district provides free testing, evaluation, and transportation to the program.	Students must provide current and appropriate documentation as defined by the college. If high school documentation is inadequate, the student pays for additional evaluation/testing.

Frequent coverage of small amounts of material.	Usually infrequent. It may be cumulative and cover large amounts of material. Some classes may require only papers and/or projects instead of exams.
Make-up tests are often available.	Make-up exams are seldom an option. It may have to be requested.
Test dates can be arranged to avoid conflict with other events.	Usually, tests are scheduled without regard to other demands.
Frequently conducts review sessions emphasizing important concepts before tests.	Review sessions are rarely offered. Students may need to find a tutor or study group.
High School	Postsecondary Education
Parent/Guardian Involvement	
Parents and teachers may provide support and guidance and set priorities. Additionally, parent permission is required (until 18 years of age).	Students are considered adults with decision-making authority. They set their own priorities. Parent permission is not required. Due to FERPA, an institution cannot discuss any student's information with parents without permission from the student.
Parents and teachers often remind students of their responsibilities and guide them in setting priorities.	Decision-making is primarily the student's responsibility. The student must balance their responsibilities and set priorities.
Parents typically manage finances for school-related activities.	Students are responsible for money management and basic needs.
High School	Postsecondary Education
Grades	
Good homework grades may assist in raising the overall grade when test grades are lower.	Tests and major papers provide the majority of a student's grade.
Extra credit options are often available.	Generally not offered.
Initial test grades, especially when low, may not have an adverse effect on grades.	First tests are often "wake-up calls" to let students know what is expected.
High School	Postsecondary Education
Other Factors to Consider	
The main office exists as the center of activity for the school.	Students are responsible for knowing where to locate information, assistance, and study support.
Through vehicles such as the IEP, students, parents, teachers, counselors, and support staff work together to ensure that student needs and accommodations are provided.	Students, <u>not teachers, counselors, or parents</u> , must be able to identify their disability, provide documentation, and request accommodations and support.
Transition planning and timelines exist to clarify students' vision, identify programming choices and coordinate appropriate coursework options.	Students make course selections with some assistance from advisors or instructors.
Personal services for medical or physical disability are required.	No personal services are required.**

* Although responsibility lies with the student, Disability Support Services works closely to develop Accommodation Requests and will advocate for the student if difficulty arises.

**Disability Support Services may assist students in efforts to advocate for such services.

Sources: [University of Washington Disability Resources for Students](#), [Bellingham Technical College Accessibility Resources Office](#), and Chicago GEAR UP.

Common Types of Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities in reading (Dyslexia)

There are two types of learning disabilities in reading. Basic reading problems occur when there is difficulty understanding the relationship between sounds, letters, and words. Reading comprehension problems occur when there is an inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases, and paragraphs. **Signs of reading difficulty include:**

- Letter and word recognition
- Understanding words and ideas
- Reading speed and fluency
- General vocabulary skills

Learning disabilities in math (Dyscalculia)

Learning disabilities in math vary greatly depending on the child's other strengths and weaknesses. A young person's ability to do math will be affected differently by a language learning disability, a visual disorder, or difficulty with sequencing, memory, or organization.

Learning disabilities in writing (Dysgraphia)

Learning disabilities in writing can involve the physical act of writing or the mental activity of comprehending and synthesizing information. Basic writing disorder refers to physical difficulty forming words and letters. Expressive writing disability indicates a struggle to organize thoughts on paper.

Symptoms of a written language learning disability revolve around the act of writing. **Signs of writing difficulty include:**

- Neatness and consistency of writing
- Accurately copying letters and words
- Spelling consistency
- Writing organization and coherence

Learning disabilities in language (Aphasia/dysphasia)

Language and communication learning disabilities involve the ability to understand or produce spoken language. Language is also considered an output activity because it requires organizing thoughts in the brain and calling upon the right words to explain something or communicate with someone else verbally.

Signs of a language-based learning disorder involve problems with verbal language skills, such as the ability to retell a story, fluency of speech, and understanding the meaning of words, parts of speech, directions, etc.

Auditory and visual processing problems

The eyes and the ears are the primary means of delivering information to the brain, a process sometimes called "input."

Auditory processing disorder

Professionals may refer to the ability to hear well as "auditory processing skills" or "receptive language." The ability to hear things correctly greatly impacts the ability to read, write, and spell. An inability to distinguish subtle differences in sounds or hearing sounds at the wrong speed makes it difficult to sound out words and understand the basic concepts of reading and writing.

Visual processing disorder

Problems in visual perception include missing subtle differences in shapes, reversing letters or numbers, skipping words, skipping lines, misperceiving depth or distance, or having problems with eye-hand coordination. Professionals may refer to the work of the eyes as "visual processing." Visual perceptions can affect gross and fine motor skills, reading comprehension, and math.

Other disorders that make learning challenging include, but are not limited to, the following:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

While not considered a learning disability, ADD, or ADHD may affect learning. Youth with this disorder often have problems sitting still, focusing, following instructions, staying organized, and completing homework.

Autism

This developmental disorder affects the brain's normal development of social and communication skills. Difficulty mastering certain academic skills can stem from pervasive developmental disorders such as autism and Asperger's syndrome. Young people with autism spectrum disorders may have trouble communicating, reading body language, learning basic skills, socializing, and making eye contact.

Dyslexia	Difficulty reading.	Challenges with reading, writing, spelling, and speaking.
Dyscalculia	Difficulty with math.	Challenges doing math problems, understanding time, and using money.
Dysgraphia	Difficulty writing.	Challenges with handwriting, spelling, and organizing ideas.
Dyspraxia (Sensory Integration Disorder)	Difficulty with fine motor skills.	Challenges with hand-eye coordination, balance, and manual dexterity.
Dysphasia/aphasia	Difficulty with language.	Challenges understanding spoken language and poor reading comprehension.
Auditory Processing Disorder	Difficulty hearing the differences between sounds.	Challenges with reading, comprehension, and language.
Visual Processing Disorder	Difficulty interpreting visual information.	Challenges with maps, charts, symbols, and pictures.

Source: Chicago GEAR UP

Documentation of a Disability

If a student would like the postsecondary school to provide academic accommodation, the student must identify themselves as having a disability. Likewise, the student should let the school know about the disability to ensure that they are assigned to accessible facilities. In any event, the disclosure of a disability is always voluntary.

What Academic Accommodations Must A Postsecondary School Provide?

The appropriate academic accommodations must be determined based on your disability and individual needs. Academic accommodations may include auxiliary aids and services and adjustments to academic requirements as necessary to ensure equal educational opportunity.

Examples of accommodations include:

- A TTY phone in your dorm room.
- Screen-reading, voice recognition, or other adaptive software or hardware.
- Priority registration.
- A reduced course load.
- Preferential seating in classrooms.
- Note-takers.
- Recording devices.
- Sign language interpreters.
- Extended time for testing.

In providing an academic accommodation, postsecondary institutions are not required to lower or substantially modify essential course requirements. For example, although a school may be required to provide extended testing time, it is not necessary to change the substantive content of the test. In addition, postsecondary institutions do not have to make adjustments that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program, or activity or result in an undue financial or administrative burden. Finally, postsecondary institutions do not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature, such as tutoring and typing.

When Should a Student Request an Accommodation?

Students may request an academic accommodation at any time; however, it is preferable and highly recommended to request it as early as possible. Some academic accommodations may take more time to provide than others, e.g., transcribing a textbook into Braille.

Students need to be aware of the postsecondary school's procedures to ensure the school has enough time to review any request and provide an appropriate academic accommodation.

Additionally, most postsecondary institutions will require that a student show current documentation showing that they have a disability that requires an adjustment/accommodation.

What Documentation is Required?

Schools may establish documentation guidelines to determine eligibility for accommodations. Some schools require more thorough documentation than others do. An IEP or 504 plan may help identify services that have been effective for you; however, this is generally not sufficient documentation. Contact the school's DS office to find out their documentation guidelines.

Required Documentation Must:

- Be current (postsecondary testing is preferred).
- Make a clear connection between the disability and the requested accommodations.
- Be performed by a qualified evaluator- such as a medical doctor, psychologist, or another qualified diagnostician.
- Clearly state the diagnoses.
- Clearly state the functional limitations resulting from the diagnoses.
- State the name, credentials, and contact information of the professional who made the diagnosis.

Who has to pay for a new evaluation?

Neither the high school nor the postsecondary school must conduct or pay for a new evaluation to document a disability and need for academic accommodation. Therefore, students may have to pay or find funding to pay an appropriate professional for an evaluation. A student eligible for services through the state vocational rehabilitation agency might qualify for an assessment at no cost. See [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation at DSHS](#).

Source: [U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights](#).

Common Accommodations in Postsecondary Institutions

Categories Disabilities	Common Accommodations
Deaf/Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign language interpreters (ASL/English) • Priority Registration (schedule interpreters) • Notetakers • Real-Time Captioning • Media Captioning assistance
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustable equipment (chairs, keyboards, stools) • ADA adjustable desks/tables • Note takers or tape recorders • Extra time tests (hand mobility issues) • Accessible testing area • Access to/use of assistive technology • Disabled Parking
Speech/Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Recorders • Note takers/Live Scribe Pens • Extra time on tests • Consideration for courses with oral presentations
Learning Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note takers/Recorders/Live Scribe Pens • Reduced distraction Testing • Extra time on tests • Alternative instructional material (books, course packets, journals, online handouts) • Priority Registration (to convert instructional materials) • Access to/use of assistive technology
Blind/Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note takers/Recorders • Scribes and or Readers for tests • Alternative instructional material (books, course packets, journals, online handouts) • Priority Registration (to convert instructional materials) • Access to/use of assistive technology
Chronic/Acute Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability-Related Absences considerations • Note takers/Recorders/Live Scribe Pens • Priority Registration (may need online/hybrid course) • Reduced Distraction Testing • Extra time on tests
Neurological/Nervous System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note takers/Recorders/Live Scribe Pens • Reduced Distraction Testing • Extra time on tests • Memory Aids for tests (must be faculty and/or DS approved)
Psychological/Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note takers/Recorders/Live Scribe Pens • Reduced Distraction Testing • Extra time on tests

Source: Disability Services, Lower Columbia College

Comparing Accommodations (Examples)

Accommodation	Secondary (K-12)	Postsecondary
Preferential seating	Yes	Yes
Note taker	Yes	Usually
Copies of instructor's notes	Yes	Depends
Permission to record lectures	Yes	Usually
Extended time for exams	Yes	Yes
Extended time for assignments	Yes	Rarely
Modified tests	Yes	Not Usually
Modified texts for lower reading levels	Yes	No
Tutoring	Yes	Depends
Alternate format texts	Yes	Yes
Waivers for graduation requirements	Yes	No
Provide transportation to school	Yes	No
Use of spelling and grammar tools for tests	Yes	Depends
Calculator for math tests	Yes	Rarely
Administer test over several days	Yes	Rarely
Distraction-reduced environment for tests	Yes	Yes
Minimized memory demands with word lists	Yes	No
Personal care attendant	Yes	No
Unlimited excused absences	Yes	No
Alternate or modified assignments	Yes	No

Source: Disability Services, Shoreline Community College.

What Are Transition Services?

Transition services help high school students with disabilities prepare for life after high school, including the following:

- Independent living.
- Employment.
- Postsecondary education.

Transition to Postsecondary

Transition planning is a process for students with disabilities focusing on life after high school. Ideally, this planning should begin in middle school; however, it typically starts in high school. IDEA requires that IEP transition services begin no later than age 16. It can start earlier if the IEP team determines it is appropriate. A student with a disability can participate in planning the transition from high school to higher education during IEP meetings. Preparing for this goal is essential for students who plan to attend some form of postsecondary school. The IEP must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessment related to education/training, employment, and relevant independent living skills.

Student-centered planning and student-led IEPs are essential to transition planning. Transition conversations, building skills like self-advocacy, managing accommodations, and tracking their progress can start as early as grade school. These skills take time to build. Transition planning allows students with disabilities and their parents and guardians to understand and explore the opportunities available after graduating high school, such as college, [vocational rehabilitation](#), employment, and [independent living](#). It also helps young people with disabilities develop life skills through hands-on experiences to become successful, independent members of society.

The student, their parents or guardians, teachers, and school counselors should work together to develop a plan for life after high school. This plan should consider the student's strengths, preferences, interests, accommodations need, and other key factors. The types of questions to think about are like what any student would need to address, with a few additional considerations:

- What types of things interest this student? Is the student creative and thinking about going into the arts? Is there an interest in a particular field, such as journalism or mathematics?
- Is the student thinking about going to college? If so, which type of school would be a good fit (community college, in-state four-year university, out-of-state university, etc.)?
- Is the student thinking about training for a trade? If so, what schools or programs are available? Which would be a good fit for him/her?
- Which standardized test does the student need to take to apply for colleges or technical/trade schools? Will the student need any accommodations while taking these tests?
- What types of accommodations would the student need in college or at technical/trade school?
- What are the student's financial needs? Does he or she want to apply for student aid? Which types of aid would be best (e.g., loans, grants, scholarships)? When are the applications due? What information needs to be provided?
- Which type of living situation is the student interested in (e.g., at home, college dorm, on his/her own) and what types of accommodations will the student need?
- Is the student interested in going directly into the workforce? What job training, internship or apprenticeship opportunities are available?

School districts are responsible for providing transition services for students eligible for special education. The focus is on improving students' academic and functional achievement to help them move from school to post-school activities.

Activities while in school may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Career exploration.
- Community-based work experiences.
- Activities provide knowledge about work habits and responsibility.

School staff can support and help students to be successful in the transition to college by working towards **postsecondary goals**, including building on the following:

- Social and life skills.
- Financial literacy.
- Self-determination/self-advocacy skills.

After high school, activities may include the following:

- Postsecondary education.
- Vocational education.
- Integrated employment.
- Supported employment.
- Continuing and adult education.
- Adult services.
- Independent living, if appropriate.
- Community participation.

How to Find Your School District's 504 Coordinator

Each school district is required to designate a staff member as the "504 Coordinator" to oversee the protection of civil rights for students with disabilities eligible for 504 services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The 504 Coordinator list is published by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Equity and Civil Rights Office at <https://www.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/equity-and-civil-rights>.

Center for Change and Transition Services' Agency Connections Map

Use this [Agency Connections Map](#). Choose any county in Washington State and find resources regarding employment, health and emergency, housing, postsecondary education, recreation and leisure, and transportation.




Career Preparation

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation \(DVR\)](#)

DVR provides services to individuals who want to work but need assistance due to a physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental disability. A DVR counselor works with each individual one-on-one to design a customized, step-by-step plan to achieve the desired job goal.

- **For VR eligibility, the impairment should be expected to last more than one year.** For example, someone who has broken their leg may need a 504 Plan for a short-term impairment and would not be eligible for VR services.
- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**
Washington State Offices: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/office-of-the-secretary/division-vocational-rehabilitation>
Services offered: counseling and guidance, Counselors for the Deaf and hard of Hearing, Assessment Services, Benefit Planning, Independent Living Services, Assistive Technology Services, Training and education, and Job-Related Services.
- **How to find your high school's DVR Transition Liaison**
Click on your county on DVR's school transition webpage: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/dvr/school-transition>.
As you scroll down, you will find your high school and its DVR Transition Liaison.

Transition Timeline: What to Do & When to Do It- For Students Eligible for an IEP and/or 504 Plan

Age	Task	Contact
15-16	<p>Apply for a Washington State I.D. card. WHY: It will be needed to apply for adult services.</p>	 Get an I.D. card at your local Department of Licensing
Sophomore Year	<p>Apply to join the University of Washington DO-IT Scholars Program before the January deadline. WHY: This program prepares young people with disabilities for college, careers, independent living, and societal leadership roles. DO-IT Scholars explore careers and the world of work and learn to select and use adaptive technology, applications software, and Internet resources.</p>	 1-888-972-DOIT
16	<p>Apply to become a client of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). WHY: When your son/daughter turns 21, you may want these service options. Long-term job coaching support is based on the availability of funding.</p>	www.dshs.wa.gov/ddd
17-19	<p>Apply for HUD Housing. WHY: The wait list for housing can be very long, so it is important to apply early.</p>	
18	<p>If your child does not receive Social Security Benefits – apply now! WHY: They are now adults, and their parents' income is not counted. They may be eligible for cash and medical benefits. Many provisions, called WORK INCENTIVES, allow people with disabilities to keep benefits, including Medicare/Medicaid while working. They need to pay rent to the family to maximize all benefits.</p>	
Young Men 18	<p>Register for Selective Services. WHY: It's the law. Also, if planning to apply for financial aid to attend college, applying for Selective Service is required.</p>	Apply online at: https://www.usa.gov/selective-service Get a form from your local post office. Return the form that comes in the mail.
18 or last year of school	<p>Apply for services with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). WHY: This agency helps people with disabilities become employed and understands how working will affect people's benefits.</p>	 www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr
Senior Year	<p>Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). WHY: If seeking aid to attend college, students should complete the FAFSA in October of their senior year.</p>	 www.fafsa.ed.gov
Anytime	<p>Apply for job search assistance with WorkSource Youth Services. WHY: This is the local program that can help self-directed job seekers find part-time and/or summer employment to help develop work skills.</p>	https://www.worksourcewa.com/Resources/YouthProgram.aspx

<p>Anytime</p>	<p>Call for local transit system bus Travel Training and Paratransit services. WHY: This is free training for people who want to learn to be independent on the bus and flexible alternative public transportation for people with disabilities and the elderly.</p>	<p>Travel Training & Paratransit Services</p>
<p>Anytime</p>	<p>Apply for services at a local Center for Independent Living (CIL). The State Independent Living Council [SILC] can help you find local resources. WHY: These organizations support independent living skills development, advocacy, and benefits planning.</p>	<p>http://www.wasilc.org/</p>

Source: DSHS: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/dvr/school-transition>

Suggested High School Task Lists

The following recommended tasks will help students with disabilities plan and prepare for college.

Freshmen Year

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- Learn the specific nature of your disability and how to explain it so others will understand your needs.
- Learn about your strengths.
- Learn how to participate actively in your IEP, especially your transition plan, which is your plan to help you achieve your goal of attending college.
- When developing your transition plan with your case manager and IEP team, learn to advocate for yourself.
- Prepare academically by carefully planning your high school courses.
- Work with your guidance counselor to ensure you have the standard and verified credits you need to obtain the desired diploma.
- Learn how to use the academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, services, and learning strategies you need in college.
- Explore assistive technology and how it can help you complete tasks that are difficult for you.
- Ask your guidance counselor to teach you about the college resources available in your school.
- Explore career options with your guidance counselor and visit your school career or college center.
- Become involved in school- or community-based activities that interest you and might lead to a career.
- Talk to people in various professions to find out what they like and dislike about their jobs and what kind of education is needed.
- Continue to work on the skills that are hard for you to do.
- Learn strategies to help you access the same course work as your peers.

Sophomore Year

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- Continue actively participating in your IEP transition planning with your case manager and IEP team.
- Continue taking courses to prepare you for college.
- Continue to learn about your strengths.
- Continue to work on the skills that are hard for you to do.
- Add to your understanding and use of learning strategies to help you access the same coursework as your peers.
- Participate in extracurricular activities, hobbies, and work experiences.
- Identify interests, aptitudes, values, and opportunities related to occupations in which you are interested.
- Meet with your career or guidance counselor to discuss colleges and their requirements.
- Register and take the Fall Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT).
- Research how to get accommodations for the PSAT.
- Speak with college representatives who visit your high school and attend college fairs.
- Visit college campuses and talk to college students about their campus experiences.
- Continue to save for college and investigate funding sources.

- Consider leading your IEP transition planning with your case manager and IEP team.
- Learn about the differences in how you receive your academic support in high school and when you get to college. Have your IEP team discuss the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which covers the support you receive in high school, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which covers support in college.
- Continue your involvement in school- or community-based extracurricular activities.
- Continue exploring assistive technology.
- Focus on matching your interests and abilities to the appropriate college choice.
- Research the resources in your state to find a college preview event for students with disabilities. If your community has this type of event, plan on attending.
- Look for college campuses with majors you might be interested in and the kind of campus community in which you would like to live.
- Identify the appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services you will need in the postsecondary setting.
- Keep a current list of the academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services you use in high school in a portfolio.
- Consider taking a course to prepare for the SAT or the ACT test.
- Research how to get accommodations on the SAT or ACT.
- Take the SAT or ACT in the spring. Consider taking them more than once.
- Establish a possible career goal (you can always change your mind).
- Consider a possible college major consistent with your career goal, strengths, and interests.
- Learn time management, organizational skills, study skills, assertiveness, communication, stress management, and test-taking strategies to help you get good grades.
- Learn how to set short-term and long-term goals.
- Learn how to advocate for yourself — not everyone will understand your disability or be sensitive to your needs.
- Gather information about college programs that offer the disability services you need (you may want to add these to your portfolio).
- Speak with college representatives who visit your high school and at college fairs.
- Visit campuses, especially service providers, to verify the available services and how to access them. If you can't visit the campus, take a virtual tour on the college's Website. Check the disability support services section of the college's site to understand what you need to do to receive academic services and support.
- Consider people to ask for recommendations — teachers, counselors, employers, coaches, etc.
- Investigate financial aid availability from federal, state, local, and private sources.
- Investigate the availability of scholarships provided by organizations, such as corporations, labor unions, professional associations, religious organizations, and credit unions.
- Continue saving for college.
- Contact the vocational rehabilitation counselor who serves your school to determine your eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services.
- Invite the VR counselor to attend your IEP meeting.
- Make sure that the documentation of your disability is current. Colleges usually want current testing based on adult norms, usually less than three years old when you begin college.

- Lead your IEP meeting.
- Learn about the Americans with Disabilities Act and how it helps you in college and on the job.
- Meet with your school guidance counselor early in the year to discuss your plans.
- Continue to develop your advocacy skills and polish your study skills.
- Learn about what faculty members in college will expect from you.
- Continue exploring possible college majors consistent with your career goal, strengths, and interests.
- Figure out how you learn best and how this will help you in college.
- Find out how to get accommodations in college. It's a very different process from high school!
- Role-play talking with professors about your accommodations.
- Explore assistive technology that you may need in college.
- Research the resources in your state to find a college preview event for students with disabilities. If your community has this type of event, plan on attending.
- Role-play college interviews with counselors, family members, and teachers.
- Finalize your portfolio so that it contains at least the following:
 - Copies of your psychological and educational evaluations.
 - Transcripts.
 - ACT or SAT scores.
 - Your current or latest IEP.
 - Your medical records (if appropriate).
 - A writing sample or other work samples related to your choice of a major.
 - Your letters of recommendation from teachers and employers.
 - The current list of academic accommodations and auxiliary aids and services you may need in college (be sure to include assistive technologies).
- Visit colleges (start early in the year):
 - Visit the college website and look at the admissions office to see when college tours are offered.
 - Be prepared when you visit colleges to write or talk about your experiences.
 - Admissions officers will provide information about admissions procedures and financial aid opportunities.
 - Take your portfolio with you to share with disability service providers, if appropriate.
 - Evaluate the disability services, service provider, and staff.
 - Talk with college students receiving disability support services about their experiences.
- Compare the various colleges and consider living in the campus community (e.g., housing, social activities, classrooms, leisure activities, services for students with disabilities, and athletic activities).
- Apply to two or more of your preferred colleges — choose one that is a “reach” or your “dream” school, one where you expect to be accepted, and one where you KNOW you can be accepted.
- Prepare your applications carefully, paying close attention to the instructions and deadlines. Be neat. Be accurate.
- When accepted, consider attending the pre-admission summer program (if available). It will be worth your time and ease the process when classes start in the fall.
- Take the SAT again, if appropriate.
- Send a thank you note to the individuals who wrote you recommendation letters.

Source: Going-to-College.org

Sample Transition Questions for School Staff to Consider

- When a student turns 16, how does the district provide transition-planning services specifically designed to help students move from high school into work and/or postsecondary education and training opportunities?
- How will social skills lead to successful work, education, and training situations be taught and incorporated into the curriculum?
- How are self-advocacy and self-determination skills taught and incorporated into the curriculum?
- How do families and youth actively participate in decision-making regarding identifying post-school goals for education and/or training, employment, and independent living?
- How are youth with disabilities provided specific opportunities to learn about various post-high school learning opportunities, including vocational and training programs, trade schools, community and adult learning programs (i.e., not just 2- or 4-year colleges)?
- When do youth interested in attending a vocational, training, or trade school program have opportunities to visit the school, apply for scholarships, and receive help with admittance procedures? Are youth with disabilities specifically targeted to participate in these activities? Do youth with disabilities have the opportunity to visit and speak with representatives from disability services at the postsecondary education institutions?
- Do youth with disabilities have the skills, services, and support to complete their high school education, preparing them to enroll in and complete postsecondary education or training programs?
- How are youth with disabilities encouraged and supported to take general education classes that will prepare them for success in postsecondary education and training programs?
- How are youth with disabilities taught the self-advocacy and self-determination skills they will need to avoid or overcome various challenges they may face once they leave high school and seek further education?
- What may be barriers within the district to youth with disabilities enrolling in a post-high school education program? How is the district working to eliminate the barriers or prepare students to overcome these barriers?
- How are youth and their families informed about postsecondary education/training programs?
- What district services contribute to youth enrolling in a post-high school education program? For example, how does the district promote further education training for programs other than 2- and 4-year colleges? Have interagency agreements between the school district and local adult education and training programs been established? Are students with disabilities encouraged and supported to participate in dual enrollment to help them transition from high school to college?
- What professional development opportunities has the district provided to help school counselors and general and special education high school teachers: (a) recognize the barriers and challenges some youth with disabilities face, and (b) develop the skills to help youth with disabilities make a successful transition to postsecondary education or training settings?

Source: [Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative/Department of Public Instruction](#)

Self-Advocacy Resources

The following activities are designed to help students explore interests and start to plan for postsecondary education:

- [My learning style activities](#)
- [Knowing my strengths activities](#)
- [Exploring my interests activities](#)
- [Accepting my disability activities](#)
- [Setting my goals activities](#)
- [My advocacy plan activities](#)

The following activities help students plan for college:

- [Choosing a college activities](#)
- [Deciding on a major activities](#)
- [Applying for college activities](#)
- [Getting financial aid activities](#)
- [Taking standardized tests activities](#)
- [High school "To Do" lists activities](#)

Source: Going-to-College.org

Resources for Postsecondary Options

Washington State and National Resources

- [AccessIT](#). AccessIT promotes electronic and information technology (E&IT) for students and employees with disabilities at all academic levels in educational institutions. This website features the AccessIT Knowledge Base, a searchable, growing database of questions and answers regarding accessible E&IT. It is designed for educators, policymakers, librarians, technical support staff, students and employees with disabilities, and their advocates.
- [Affordable Colleges Online: College Guide for Students with Disabilities](#). This website provides a complete guide to college financing, including a section devoted to finding affordable postsecondary options for students with disabilities.
- [ARC of Washington](#). The Arc of Washington State's mission is to promote the education, health, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, inclusion, and choices of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- [Association on Higher Education and Disability \(AHEAD\)](#). AHEAD is a professional association committed to fully participating persons with disabilities in postsecondary education. It provides resources for educators, parents, and students.
- [Attention Deficit Disorder Association](#). ADDA's mission is to help people with ADD lead happier, more successful lives through education, research, and public advocacy. Whether you have ADD, someone special in your life does, or you treat, counsel, or teach those who do, ADDA is an organization for you.
- [Autism Outreach Project](#). Welcome to the home of the Autism Outreach Project, a State-Needs Project through the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in collaboration with the Department of Social and Health Services and Northwest ESD 189. A statewide system in which the identification, program development, placement, and staff development activities for students with autism are coordinated to ensure that all school districts, parents, agencies, and students are appropriately served throughout Washington.
- [Brock's Academy – Keeping Kids Spirit for Learning Alive!](#) We offer premium one-on-one in-home private school classes and in-home tutoring. We serve students and families looking for something different, who want an alternative out-of-the-box approach due to learning style differences, learning challenges, and disabilities, or who desire a nontraditional flexible school schedule and calendar. We offer year-round classes and year-round open enrollment. Each student's program is customized to meet their individual learning needs and interests.
- [Career Bridge](#). Created by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Career Bridge is a local resource that assists students in comparing local community colleges, training programs, and universities. It also has links to financial aid.
- [Center for Change in Transition](#). The center aims to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in Washington State. This website provides special education teachers, directors, students, and

their families with resources, information, and news regarding secondary special education and transition services.

- [CheckOutACollege](#). CheckOutACollege is a local resource that allows students to explore careers and find an appropriate college program.
- [Disability Rights Washington](#). Disability Rights Washington is a private nonprofit organization that protects the rights of people with disabilities statewide. Our mission is to advance the dignity, equality, and self-determination of people with disabilities. We work to pursue justice on matters related to human and legal rights. We provide free advocacy services to people with disabilities.
- [Disability.gov](#). Disability.gov is the federal government website for comprehensive information about disability-related programs, services, policies, laws, and regulations. The site links to thousands of resources from various federal government agencies, state and local governments, and nonprofit organizations nationwide.
- [DSHS – People Helping People](#). Links and information from Washington State Department of Social and Health Services.
- [Easter Seals of Washington State](#). For over 80 years, Easter Seals has been helping individuals with disabilities and special needs and their families live better lives. Whether helping someone improve physical mobility, return to work, or gain greater independence for everyday living, Easter Seals offers various services to help people with disabilities address life's challenges and achieve personal goals.
- [Fathers Network](#). Supports fathers and families raising children with special health care needs and developmental disabilities.
- [George Washington University HEATH Resource Center](#). The GWU HEATH Resource Center Clearinghouse provides information on the transition to higher education, including information about disability support services, policies, procedures, accommodations, and financial assistance. The Heath Guidance and Career Counselor Toolkit provides extensive resources.
- [Hearing Loss Association of Washington](#). We have the information you need on hearing loss in both adults and children, frequently asked questions regarding hearing loss, hearing disorders like tinnitus (ringing in the ears) or Meniere's disease, cochlear implants, new technologies, noise and hearing loss, links to some useful online resources, books and videos of interest, and state news and events of our national, state and local chapters. Formerly, the Washington State Association of Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People.
- [Hearing Speech & Deafness Center](#). Communication means working with each client and their family to determine and support whatever will be the most effective communication method for that person. It may be sign language, hearing aids, speech therapy, language training, motor therapy, assistive devices, or technology. The HSDC staff is experienced in all of these methods and uses them in combination with a genuine desire to serve their client well. This combination of expertise and caring has made HSDC successful, with thousands of people each year.
- [Learning Disabilities Association \(LDA\) of Washington State](#). The Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Washington promotes and provides services and support to improve the quality of life for individuals and families affected by learning and attentional disabilities.
- [Microsoft DisAbility Scholarship](#). This scholarship will identify promising high school seniors who have the potential to enter and complete a vocational or academic college program and have a financial need. The amount of this non-renewable scholarship to be awarded is \$5,000, paid through the Seattle Foundation on behalf of the disAbility Employee Resource Group (ERG) at Microsoft to the recipient's school's Financial Aid Office.
- [Music Works Northwest](#). Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.
- [NW CHADD](#). The NW Chapter of CHADD is a national nonprofit organization that provides education and advocacy regarding AD/HD issues across the lifespan. We are an all-volunteer organization.
- [Online College Database -- Directory of U.S. Colleges](#). A complete guide to distance- learning for students with disabilities. This website provides resources on working with disability services, employing assistive technology, evaluating online programs, and succeeding in the virtual classroom.
- [Pacific Northwest Angelman Syndrome Foundation](#). Pacific Northwest Angelman Syndrome Foundation was formed in 1994 to increase public awareness of Angelman Syndrome (AS) and serve as a resource and source of support for individuals with AS and their families in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska.
- [Parent Help 123](#). Parents work hard to provide for their families. Sometimes, they need a little help. ParentHelp123 can help you determine if your family may qualify for health insurance and food programs in Washington State!

- [PAVE](#). PAVE is a parent-directed organization that works with families, individuals with disabilities, professionals, and community members from all walks of life and with all types of disabilities.
- [People First of Washington](#). We are people first, our disabilities are secondary!
- [PEPNet, the Postsecondary Education Programs Network](#). PEPNet, the Postsecondary Education Programs Network, is the national collaboration of the four regional postsecondary education centers for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. The goal of PEPNet is to assist postsecondary institutions across the nation to attract and effectively serve Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.
- [Resilience Trumps Aces](#). On the Children's Resilience Initiative™ website, you'll find information for parents, service providers and Walla Walla community members. You can learn about the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES for short) research. As parents, you can also learn how to help your children be resilient – to rise above the challenge of ACEs and thrive! After all, Resilience is our middle name! You can also look at services in the Walla Walla Valley – through the lens of ACEs – you can see what services we have here, how to access them, and where our gaps are – what we as a community need to build to help our children to thrive. In these pages, we'll show you that "All Roads Lead to Resilience"!
- [Sibshops – The Sibling Support Project](#). Sibshops are pedal-to-the-metal celebrations of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. Sibshops acknowledge that being the brother or sister of a person with special needs is, for some, a good thing, for others a not-so-good thing, and for many, somewhere in-between. They believe that brothers and sisters have much to offer one another — if they are given a chance. Sibshops are a spirited mix of new games (designed to be unique, off-beat, and appealing to a wide ability range), new friends, and discussion activities.
- [Summer Camp Directory – Seattle Children's Center for Children with Special Needs](#). The center compiles a searchable list of summer camps for children with special needs in Washington State (also available in printable PDF version). To find a summer camp or program, select the type of camp, special needs considerations, camp location, and desired month, and then review your search results.
- [The Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs](#). Developed by the Center for Children with Special Needs with support from the Washington State Department of Health Children with Special Health Care Needs Program, the tools are designed to provide information and resources for families of children with special health care needs and professionals about the following topics: the parent-child care provider partnership, emotional support for families, and care coordinators in Washington State.
- [The College Board](#). The College Board's Big Future page offers tools to help with planning for college, finding a campus, and paying for college. It also includes scholarship lists.
- [Think College!](#) This website discusses college options for people with intellectual disabilities and provides resources and tools for students, families, and professionals.
- [Tourette Syndrome of Washington And Oregon States](#). Exist to offer information, support, and resources regarding Tourette Syndrome and its related conditions. We work with the medical community, the schools and families whose lives are touched by Tourette Syndrome.
- [WA State Hands and Voices](#). This parent-driven organization is dedicated to supporting & unifying families with children who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind. We provide families with a non-biased perspective of communication choices and the resources they need to improve communication access & education outcomes for their children. Our activities focus on networking with parents & professionals to empower their children throughout the state to reach their highest potential.
- [Washington Assistive Technology Act Program \(WATAP\)](#). This consumer advocacy network includes the University of Washington Center for Technology and Disability Studies (UWCTDS) and the AT Resource Center at Easter Seals Washington (EATRC). WATA also receives guidance from a Consumer Majority Advisory Board. WATA activities include information and referral, consultation, and training related to selecting AT devices, services and funding, legal advice and advocacy, policy development, legislative action, technical consultation and training, publications, and development and maintenance of online resources.
- [Washington Connection – Helps determine eligibility for Government Services](#). DSHS has launched a new benefits portal where people can decide if they are eligible for state services and apply online for some programs.
- [Washington Education Association](#). Represents nearly 70,000 school and college employees in Washington. As the state's largest public employee labor organization, we aim to make education the best for students, staff, and communities.
- [Washington OSPI/Special Education](#). Special Education and related services are provided annually to about 124,000 eligible students across 295 school districts in the state. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that children with disabilities and the families of such children have

access to free appropriate public education (FAPE). IDEA is focused on improving educational results for children with disabilities. RCW 28A.155 provides the statutory basis for special education services in Washington, and WAC 392-172A provides the regulatory basis for IDEA and RCW 28A.155. You will find important announcements, most special education publications, a staff directory, SEAC information, links, events, a mailing list, and much more.

- [Washington State Department of Early Learning](#). The Department of Early Learning (DEL) at DCYF strives to help create safe, healthy, nurturing learning experiences for all Washington children. Our work focuses on the earliest years in children's homes, childcare, school programs, and communities. We offer information and resources for children's first and most important teachers—parents—and others who care for and teach young children.
- [Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council](#). The Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council is a council appointed by the Governor to plan comprehensive services for Washington State's citizens with developmental disabilities.
- [Washington State PTA](#). The Washington Congress of Parents and Teachers (the Washington State PTA), a branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (the National PTA), was founded in 1905. The Washington State PTA is a nonprofit membership association that seeks to bring together the home, school, and community on behalf of all children and youth.
- [Washington State Special Education Coalition \(WSSEC\)](#). The WSSEC was formed in 1977 to unite parent and professional organizations in a spirit of cooperation to share information, explore issues, and effectively advocate for quality education for all children, particularly those with special education needs in Washington State. We encourage you to use this website to learn more about the WSSEC, our mission, and our priorities.

Source: [Center for Change in Transitions Services](#)

Transitions Resources

- [Going-to-College.org](#) is designed to assist high school students with disabilities in their transition to college. By the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.
- [LD Online's College and College Prep](#) webpage provides information specifically for students with Learning Disabilities who are transitioning to college.
- [Our Ability](#). A website that encourages self-advocacy and the raising of awareness through storytelling. Various services are available, including consulting, education, mentoring, speaking, video production, employment opportunities, and public forums.
- [Project Eye-To-Eye](#). As the only national mentoring program pairing kids with LD/ADHD with similarly labeled college students, Project Eye-to-Eye encourages labeled children to become their own best advocates.
- [StrengthofUs](#). StrengthofUs is an online community designed to empower young adults through resource sharing and peer support and to build connections for those navigating the unique challenges and opportunities in the transition-age years.

Resources for Teachers, School Counselors & Youth Service Providers

- [About ME!](#) This series of lesson plans helps educators teach the basics of self-awareness and self-advocacy to transition-age students.
- [Casey Life Skills](#). A free practice tool and framework for helping transition-age students. It assesses independent living skills and provides results instantly. Although it was designed for use with children in the foster care system, the tools and resources can apply to all students, including students with disabilities.
- [Center for Change in Transition Services \(CCTS\)](#). They provide professional development to K-12 teachers on secondary transition. Their training modules are available online.
- [Individualized Learning Plans \(ILPs\)](#). Help students with disabilities, with support from school counselors, teachers and parents, define their career goals and postsecondary plans to make decisions about the courses they take and activities they participate in during high school.
- [National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability \(NCWD\) for Youth's "Guideposts for Success."](#) This detailed guide can help steer families, educators, and young people with disabilities through the transition processes.
- [The HEATH Resource Center's Guidance and Career Counselors' Toolkit](#). Provides information for guidance and career counselors who work with high school students with disabilities about how to advise them about their options after high school.

- [The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center](#). Offers resources and information for teachers of transition-age students. It includes evidence-based practices and lesson plans on topics such as employment and life skills.
- [The U.S. Department of Education's Transition of Students with Disabilities to Postsecondary Education: A Guide for High School Educators](#). Helps educators advise students with disabilities on what to expect after high school.
- [U.S. Department of Labor's Fact Sheet: Cultivating Leadership: Mentoring Youth with Disabilities](#). Provides information for teachers and other adults interested in mentoring students with disabilities.

For additional resources for students, parents, and educators, visit Disability.gov's [Making the Transition from School to Work](#) and [Preparing Youth for Employment](#) sections.

Scholarships Specifically for Students with Disabilities

In addition to scholarships available to the general public, minorities, and people pursuing a particular field of study, there are many scholarships for students with disabilities. Below are some examples:

- [Newcombe Scholarships for Students with Disabilities](#) are grants paid directly to colleges or universities to help students with disabilities who demonstrate financial need.
- [The American Association of Health & Disability \(AAHD\) Scholarship Program](#) is for students who are full-time undergraduates (freshman or greater status) or part-time or full-time graduate students. You must provide documentation of a disability. (Applicants who have not yet graduated from high school will not be considered.)
- The [disABLEDperson.com Scholarship Competition](#) asks students to write an essay for the chance to win a \$1,000 scholarship (spring deadline).
- The [Incight Go Getter Scholarship](#) provides multiple scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 to students with disabilities who have demonstrated outstanding merit in giving back to the community and overcoming obstacles to get higher education (spring deadline).
- UW DO-IT [College Funding for Students with Disabilities](#). Includes information on federal and state aid, scholarships, and awards.

For Students Who Are Blind

- [American Foundation for the Blind](#) awards scholarships from \$500 to \$3,500 to students who are blind or visually impaired (spring deadline).
- The [American Council of the Blind](#) awards scholarships to students who are legally blind. A 3.3 cumulative point average is usually required (spring deadline).
- The [Association of Blind Citizens](#) runs the Assistive Technology Fund, which covers 50 percent of the retail price of adaptive services or software for individuals who are legally blind (summer and winter deadlines).
- [Christian Record Services for the Blind](#) offers partial scholarships to young people who are legally blind to obtain a college education (spring deadline).
- The [Jewish Guild for the Blind's Guild Scholar Program](#) awards scholarships of up to \$15,000 to help outstanding high school students who are legally blind attend college (fall deadline).
- [Learning Ally's Mary P. Oenslager Scholastic Achievement Awards](#) are given to Learning Ally members who are blind or visually impaired and have received or will receive their bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees (spring deadline).
- The [Lighthouse International Scholarship & Career Awards Program](#) offers several awards of up to \$10,000 to outstanding students overcoming the challenges of vision loss by getting a higher education (spring deadline).
- The [National Federation of the Blind Scholarship Program](#) offers scholarships from \$3,000 to \$12,000 to college students who are blind in recognition of their achievements (spring deadline).
- The [United States Association of Blind Athletes \(USABA\) Copeland Scholarship](#) is awarded to USABA members who are legally blind and enrolled full-time at a two-year or four-year college, university, or technical school (fall deadline).

For Students Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

- The [Alexander Graham Bell Scholarship Program](#) offers scholarships for students with moderately severe to profound hearing loss who are getting a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree (spring deadline).
- Cochlear Americas has two scholarship programs – the [Graeme Clark Scholarship](#), open to people with the Nucleus® Cochlear Implant, and the Anders Tjellstrom Scholarship, available to people with the Baha® System (fall deadline).
- The [Gallaudet University Alumni Association](#) provides financial assistance to graduates of Gallaudet University and other accredited colleges and universities who are deaf and are getting their graduate degrees at colleges and universities not specifically for deaf or hard of hearing people (spring deadline).
- The [Sertoma Hard of Hearing or Deaf Scholarship](#) helps undergraduate students with clinically significant bilateral hearing loss pay for college (spring deadline).

For Students with Learning Disabilities

- [LD Resources Foundation Awards](#) help college students with learning disabilities pay for testing and, in some cases, award specific types of assistive technologies, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking (fall deadline).
- [National Center for Learning Disabilities \(NCLD\) Scholarships](#) are offered to high school seniors with documented learning disabilities who are getting a higher education (winter deadline). NCLD also provides a list of scholarships for students with learning disabilities or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- [Learning Ally](#) offers two annual scholarships for outstanding students with print or learning disabilities. The top three winners from each program receive a \$6,000 scholarship and participate in a national celebration in Washington, DC (spring deadline).
- [P. Buckley Moss Foundation Scholarships and Awards](#) offer financial assistance to high school seniors with learning disabilities who are getting higher education or are planning a career in the visual arts (spring deadline).
- [RiSE Scholarships Foundation, Inc.](#) offers scholarships for students who learn differently (winter deadline).
- [The Western Illinois University Chad Stovall Memorial Scholarship](#) is a \$500 scholarship for Western Illinois University students who have Tourette Syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), or attention deficit disorder (spring deadline).
- The [Learning Disabilities Association of Iowa](#) offers scholarships of \$1,000 each to high school seniors planning to enroll in college or vocational programs (spring deadline).

For Students with Physical Disabilities

- The [National Amputation Foundation Scholarship](#) offers \$500 to full-time college students with a major limb amputation who will attend an accredited university (summer deadline).
- The [1800Wheelchair.com Scholarship](#) is an essay competition that awards \$500 to high school seniors and college students with or without disabilities (spring deadline).
- The [Paralyzed Veterans of America Scholarship Program](#) awards scholarships to PVA members, spouses of PVA members, or an unmarried child (under 24 years of age) who is a dependent.

For Students with Other Disabilities

- [The Cystic Fibrosis Scholarship Foundation](#) awards scholarships to students based on financial need, academic achievement, and leadership (spring deadline).
- The [Dr. Angela E. Grant Memorial Scholarship Fund](#) gives awards to students affected by cancer. You must be a cancer survivor who is actively pursuing or planning to pursue a college education or be an applicant with an immediate family member who has been diagnosed with cancer (spring deadline).
- The [Little People of America Scholarship Program](#) awards scholarships to students with and without disabilities. Priority is given to applicants with a medically diagnosed form of dwarfism (spring deadline).
- The [Elizabeth Nash Foundation](#) awards scholarships from \$1,000 to \$2,500 to help people with Cystic Fibrosis pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees (spring deadline).
- [Google Lime Scholarship Program](#) awards \$10,000 scholarships to undergraduate, graduate, or Ph.D. computer science students with disabilities who are currently enrolled at a university.

- [Ruby's Rainbow](#) grants scholarships to adults with Down syndrome seeking postsecondary education, enrichment, or vocational classes.
- The [Lilly Reintegration Scholarship](#) is for people diagnosed with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, schizophreniform or schizoaffective disorder, or major depressive disorder.
- The [Microsoft DisAbility Scholarship](#) is awarded to high school seniors who plan on completing a vocational or academic college program and have a financial need. The amount of this non-renewable scholarship is \$5,000.
- The [Diabetes Scholars Foundation](#) program is available to incoming first-year students seeking higher education at an accredited four-year university, college, technical, or trade school. This scholarship recognizes students who are actively involved in the diabetes community and have high academic performance (spring deadline).
- The [Eric Marder Scholarship Program](#) awards scholarships to undergraduate students with primary immunodeficiency diseases who plan to complete their postsecondary education (spring deadline).
- The [National Multiple Sclerosis \(MS\) Society Scholarship Program](#) offers scholarships to high school seniors with MS or who have a parent with MS who will be attending an accredited postsecondary school for the first time. Learn more by reading the FAQs (winter deadline).
- The Hemophilia Foundation of America Scholarships awards ten \$1,500 scholarships each to promising students with bleeding disorders (spring deadline).
- The [Able Flight Training Scholarship Program](#) offers flight and career training scholarships for people with disabilities who want to learn how to fly or train for an aviation career.
- The [Hydrocephalus Association's Scholarship Program](#) provides \$1,000 scholarships to promising young adults with hydrocephalus (spring deadline).
- The [UCB Family Epilepsy Scholarship Program](#) offers educational scholarships to people living with epilepsy, family members, and caregivers who demonstrate academic and personal achievement (spring deadline).
- [Organization for Autism Research Scholarship Program: people with an autism diagnosis \(DSM-IV or later criteria\) who are](#) pursuing full-time, postsecondary, undergraduate education, or vocational-technical training.
- [Through the Looking Glass](#) offers scholarships for students with at least one parent with a disability. To qualify, you must be a high school senior planning to attend college or technical school or currently in college or technical school.

Acronyms and Definitions

AIVRS or TVR-American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services or Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs are vocational rehabilitation services offered by tribes receiving federal grants to serve federally enrolled American Indians.

CAP- Client Assistance Program is an advocacy program that can answer questions and provide information about your rights and responsibilities as a DVR client. CAP also assists clients in helping mediate and solve concerns that arise in the rehabilitation process. To reach CAP, call 1-800-544-2121 Voice/TTY.

Comparable Services and Benefits-are a) provided or paid for, in whole or in part, by other federal, state, or local public agencies, by health insurance or by employee benefits; b) available to the VR customer at the time needed to ensure progress toward achieving the employment outcome in the customer's IPE, and c) similar to the services the customer would receive from DVR.

CRP—Community Rehabilitation Providers are agencies and organizations that provide employment support, such as job coaching, job placement, work exploration, etc. They may be funded by schools, DVR, DDD, and/or county DD offices, or MH services.

DDA-Developmental Disabilities Administration

DDLOT-Developmental Disabilities Life Opportunities Trust, www.ddlot.org allows individuals with developmental disabilities or their families to set aside funds for future use without affecting their eligibility for government services and benefits.

DSB-Department of Services for the Blind

DVR-Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

ESY-Extended School Year is a school-based program that may provide disabled youth with services during the summer months. ESY programming should be offered to a student who has a decline in academic, social and/or related knowledge and skills outlined in their IEP due to an interruption in education and who needs time and services to regain their prior level of functioning. Sometimes, a youth is in a critical stage of developing a skill that has the potential for increasing their self-sufficiency. If such a skill is not entirely acquired and mastered, the current acquisition level will likely be lost due to the interruption of summer vacation. Each school district develops ESY programs differently and vary significantly in scope and style.

FAPE- Free Appropriate Public Education is an educational right of children with disabilities in the United States that is guaranteed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

IDEA- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is a federal law that ensures services to children with disabilities. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

The IEP-An Individual Education Program is a written statement that school districts develop at least annually, with each parent and youth receiving special education. It addresses the annual academic and functional achievement goals and related services for special education students.

IPE- Individualized Plan for Employment, defined in WAC 388-891-1115, is a form that documents important decisions a vocational rehabilitation customer and counselor makes about vocational rehabilitation services.

OSPI-The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is Washington's State Education Agency

Related Services- This means transportation and other developmental, corrective, or supportive services required to assist a student in benefiting from the provision of specially designed instruction.

Retraining-is the process of learning a new skill or trade, often in response to a change in the economic environment.

SSI-Supplemental Security Income is a federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes) designed to help aged, blind and disabled people with little or no income. It provides cash to meet basic food, clothing, and shelter needs.

SSDI-Social Security Disability Insurance is a federally run benefits program financed by the Social Security tax that provides aid to people who have a history of working and are currently unable to work due to a permanent disabling condition.

Supported Employment - See WAC 388-891-0800

Transition Services-(Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended Section 2 (37) definition) The term "transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living,

or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, considering the student's preferences and interests. It shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

VR- Vocational Rehabilitation

Source: [DSHS, Youth Transition Handbook](#)

Disability and Access Services Office Contacts in WA Postsecondary Institutions

Community & Technical Colleges

Each Washington community and technical college has a disability support services office. Contact the disability office staff by phone or email to discuss your educational goals.

College	Telephone	TDD, TTD, TTY, or Video	Email
Bates Technical College Disability Support Services	253-680-7013	253-680-7045	dss@bates.ctc.edu
Bellevue College Disability Resource Center	425-564-2498	425-564-4110	drc@bellevuecollege.edu
Bellingham Technical College Accessibility Resources	360-752-8450		ar@btc.edu
Big Bend Disability Support Services	509-793-2027	509-793-2325 (ipTTY)	dss@bigbend.edu
Cascadia College Disability Support Services	425-352-8128		disabilities@cascadia.edu
Centralia College Disability Services	360-736-9391 , ext. 320	800-833-6388	
Clark College Disability Support Services	360-992-2314	360-991-0901 (video)	dss@clark.edu
Clover Park Technical College Disability Resource Office	253-589-5767		disabilityresources@cptc.edu
Columbia Basin College Disability Services	509-542-4412	509-546-0400	
Edmonds Community College Services for Students with Disabilities	425-640-1320	425-354-3113 (video)	ssdmail@edcc.edu
Everett Community College Center for Disability Services	425-388-9272	425-388-9438	cgs@everettcc.edu

Grays Harbor College Disability Support Services	360-538-4068	360-538-4223	dss@ghc.edu
Green River College Disability Support Services	253-833-9111 , ext. 2631	253-288-3359	dss@greenriver.edu
Highline College Access Services	206-592-3857	206-870-4853 253-237-1106 (video)	access@highline.edu
Lake Washington Institute of Technology Disability Support Services	425-739-8300		dssinfo@lwtech.edu
Lower Columbia College Disability Support Services	360-442-2340	800-833-6388	svantrease@lowercolumbia.edu
North Seattle College Disability Services	206-934-3697	206-934-0079	ds@seattlecolleges.edu
Olympic College Access Services for Students with Disabilities	360-475-7540		AccessServices@olympic.edu
Peninsula College Services for Students with Disabilities	360-417-6373	360-406-4759 (video)	ssd@pencol.edu
Pierce College Fort Steilacoom Access & Disability Services	253-964-6526	253-964-6228	FSADS@Pierce.ctc.edu
Pierce College Puyallup Access & Disability Services	253-840-8335	253-840-8474	PYADS@pierce.ctc.edu
Renton Technical College Disability Resource Services	425-235-5840		drs@RTC.edu
Seattle Central College Disability Support Services	206-934-4183	800-833-6384	cebrina.chavez@seattlecolleges.edu

Shoreline Community College Services for Students with Disabilities	206-546-4545	206-546-4520	sas@shoreline.edu
Skagit Valley College Disability Access Services	360-416-7958 (Mount Vernon) 360-679-5319 (Whidbey Island)		lisa.forsythe@skagit.edu
South Puget Sound Community College Disability Support Services	360-596-5394		dss@spsc.edu
South Seattle College Disability Services	206-934-5137	800-833-6384	Rose.Kolovrat@seattlecolleges.edu
Spokane Community College Disability Support Services	509-533-7169	509-533-4406 (video)	AimeeElber@scc.spokane.edu
Spokane Falls Community College Disability Support Services	509-533-4166	509-315-2310 (video)	dss@sfcc.spokane.edu
Tacoma Community College Access Services	253-460-3995		access@tacomacc.edu
Walla Walla Community College Disability Support Services	509-527-4262	509-527-4412 509-593-5383 (video)	claudia.angus@wwcc.edu
Wenatchee Valley College Disability Services	509-682-6854	509-682-6853	cboyd@wvc.edu
Whatcom Community College Access & Disability Services	360-383-3043	360-255-7182 (video)	kholferty@whatcom.ctc.edu
Yakima Valley Community Disability Support Services	509-574-4960	509-574-4677	mcoomer@yvcc.edu

Public Comprehensive Institutions

- Central Washington University
<http://www.cwu.edu/disability-support/>
(V) 509.963.1202
- Eastern Washington University
<http://access.ewu.edu/disability-support-services>
(V) 509.359.6871
- Evergreen State College
<http://evergreen.edu/access/>
(V) 360.867.6348
- Western Washington University
<http://www.wwu.edu/drs/>
(V) 360.650.3083

Research Universities

- University of WA—Bothell
<http://www.bothell.washington.edu/studentaffairs/drs>
(V) 425.352.5307
- University of WA-- Seattle DSO
<http://www.washington.edu/admin/dso/>
(V) 206.543.6450
- University of WA-- Seattle DRS
<http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/>
(V) 206.543.8924
- University of WA--Tacoma
<https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/drsuwt>
(V) 253.692.4522
- WSU Pullman Campus
<http://accesscenter.wsu.edu/>
(V) 509.335.3417
- WSU Spokane Campus
<https://spokane.wsu.edu/studentaffairs/access-resources/>
(V) 509.358.7534
- WSU Tri-Cities Campus
<http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/disability/>
(V) 509.372.7352
- WSU Vancouver Campus
<http://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/access-center>
(V) 360.546.9238

Independent and Other Authorized Institutions

- Antioch University
<http://www.antioch.edu/student-services/disability-support-services/>
(V) 206.268.4151
- Bastyr University
(V) 425.602.3010
- City University
<https://my.cityu.edu/department/disability-support-services/>
(V) 206.239.4751
- Cornish College of the Arts
<https://www.cornish.edu/student-life/accessibility-accommodations/>
(V) 206.726.5098
- Digipen Institute of Technology
<https://www.digipen.edu/student-affairs/disability-support-services/>
(V) 425.629.5015
- Gonzaga University
<https://www.gonzaga.edu/academics/academic-calendar-resources/center-for-student-academic-success/disability-access>
(V) 509.313.4134
- Heritage University
<http://www.heritage.edu/student-resources/office-of-ability-services/>
(V) 509.865.8515
- Pacific Lutheran University
<http://www.plu.edu/dss/>
(V) 253.535.7206
- Saint Martin's University

<https://www.stmartin.edu/academics/academic-resources/disability-support> (V)
360.438.4580

- Seattle Pacific University
<http://spu.edu/depts/cfl/dss/>
(V) 206.281.2272
- Seattle University
<http://www.seattleu.edu/disabilities-services/>
(V) 206.296.5740
- University of Puget Sound
<http://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/academic-resources/accessibility-accommodation/>
(V) 253.879.3395
- Walla Walla University
<https://www.wallawalla.edu/resources/student-support-services/student-development-center/disability-support-services/>
(V) 509.527.4262
- Whitman College
<https://www.whitman.edu/academics/academic-resource-center/disability-support-services>
(V) 509.527.5213
- Whitworth University
<https://www.whitworth.edu/cms/administration/educational-support-services/> (V)
509.777.4534

Source: [Washington Association on Postsecondary Education and Disability \(WAPED\)](#)

References

- [Center for Change in Transitions Services](#)
- Chicago GEAR UP
- [Disability.gov](#) (As of 2019, [https:// www.dol.gov/odep/topics/disability.htm](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/disability.htm))
- [Going-to-College.org](#)
- Lower Columbia College
- [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights](#)
- [Washington Association on Postsecondary Education and Disability \(WAPED\)](#)
- [Washington State Department of Social and Health Service: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
- [Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative/Department of Public Instruction](#)

