

# Secondary Transition Services Guide

---

*School Aged Individuals ages 18-21  
(Updated July 2025)*

This *Secondary Transition Services Guide* is meant to provide the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team with an overall understanding of the options available to secondary transition aged students aged 18- 21, who may or may not be receiving residential services through the Developmental Disabilities (DD) program. A student **must** have a secondary transition plan developed and in place by his/her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday or even younger if deemed appropriate by the student's IEP team.

During development of a student's secondary transition IEP, it is recommended that the team intentionally consider the need for involvement of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and/or the Developmental Disabilities Section and make timely referrals with the permission of the youth and parents. Once eligibility for VR and/or DD has been completed, an effort should be made to include representatives from the agency on the IEP team. This involvement is based on a case-by-case basis and is not meant to be the norm for every student.

## **The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI)**

### ***Individuals are eligible for Special Education Services until the age of 21:***

- "Student with a disability" means an individual who is at least three years of age but who has not reached the age of twenty-one before August first of the year in which the individual turns twenty-one and who requires special education and related services... NDCC 15.1-32-.1(4)(a).

### ***Secondary transition requirements in the IEP:***

- Secondary transition planning for the movement from high school to adult living is required for all students receiving special education services, according to federal legislation, Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004). IEP teams must now include secondary transition planning in the first IEP that will be in effect when the child is 16 years of age, or younger if deemed appropriate by the IEP team. [34 CFR 300.320(b) and (c)] [20 U.S.C. 1414 (d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)].

### ***Secondary Transition Services:***

- The secondary transition IEP includes designated activities the student will be involved in that are aligned with and will assist the student in achieving his/her postsecondary goals. The secondary transition services include activities in the areas of instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. [34 CFR 300.43 (a)] [20 U.S.C. 1401(34)].
- The secondary transition IEP also includes a course of study (courses and experiences) that will reasonably enable the student to meet his or her post-secondary goals.

If the team feels a student has met all school district requirements and secondary transition services goals stated in his/her individual IEP and no longer benefits from additional special education and related services, the team should complete the *Graduation/Exit Checklist*, included on pages 7-9 of this document. Afterwards, if the team continues to agree that graduating from school before the age of 21 is the best option for the individual student based on a review of the individual secondary transition IEP and progress towards his/her secondary transition goals, see the Vocational Rehabilitation section of this document.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**

### ***Student Services:***

VR is an employment focused program that helps eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities achieve their vocational goal that is within their capabilities.

### ***VR Definitions***

Students with Disabilities (SWD):

- Are not younger than age 14 and in 9th grade, and not older than age 21; and in secondary, post-secondary and other recognized education programs.
- Are eligible for and receiving special education or related services Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); a student with a disability for purposes of section 504; or other students with disabilities including but not limited to physical, sensory, intellectual, mental health, and communication.

Potentially Eligible (PE) Students:

- Are students with disabilities who have not applied for or been determined eligible for VR. VR services can be provided by VR Counselors or through a VR contracted organization.

Transition services:

- It is a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability.
- Designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, competitive integrated employment, supported employment or customized employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
- Based upon the individual student's needs, considering the student's preferences and interests.

VR encourages students to apply for services two years before exiting high school to facilitate a smooth transition to post- secondary education or employment.

**To be eligible for VR services a student must want to work and meet the following eligibility requirements:**

- Have a documented disability
- Have substantial limitations that affect performance of essential job duties
- Require services that lead to employment

If a student is eligible, VR will help them determine an appropriate employment goal. The counselor and student will work together to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment, which identifies what services an individual would need to achieve their employment goal.

**Services may include** (but are NOT limited to)

- Counseling & guidance
- Information & referral
- Employment support through a community rehab provider
- Work experience
- Assistive technology or accommodations
- Training
- Job development & placement

Note: Services are unique to everyone's needs, capabilities, abilities and interests. Costs related to some services are based on financial need.

### ***Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)***

Pre-ETS are the earliest set of services available for students with disabilities under the VR program, short term in nature, and designed to help students identify career interests. Pre-ETS are provided to potentially eligible or eligible students with disabilities. Pre-ETS services:

- Further develop an awareness of career and education opportunities.
- Gain the general skills needed for employment success in any field.
- Gain the skills needed to effectively advocate for themselves as they prepare to exit secondary education and enter the workforce or other post-school activities.

VR will initiate outreach to students with disabilities who attend public or private schools or are home schooled to identify those who need transition services. Pre-ETS may be provided in a group and/or an individualized setting in collaboration with VR, LEAs, community rehabilitation providers, independent living programs, and other post-secondary training programs.

Pre-ETS will be made available to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities statewide. These services are:

### ***Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Overview***

#### **1. Job Exploration Counseling**

Helps students learn about career options, build motivation to work, and understand how school and education connect to future jobs.

#### **2. Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE)**

Gives students real work experience to help them link school to careers. WBLE can happen after school or in the summer and should support but not replace schoolwork experiences. Counselors should coordinate with schools.

#### **3. Counseling on Post-Secondary Education**

Provides information about education options after high school, such as colleges, trade schools, military, and programs for students with disabilities.

#### **4. Workplace Readiness Training**

Teaches essential job skills like communication, teamwork, and daily living skills needed for success at work.

#### **5. Training in Self-Advocacy**

Helps students learn how to speak up for themselves, make decisions, and take control of their goals and needs.

If Auxiliary aids (qualified interpreters, acquisition of assistive technology, braille materials etc.) are needed by a student with a sensory or communicative disability to access or participate in pre-ETS, it would constitute an allowable pre-ETS expenditure.

#### ***Supported or Customized Employment***

VR provides supported employment (SE) or customized employment (CE) to those eligible individuals who, because of the significance of their disability, require intensive services to gain competitive integrated employment and Individual Employment Supports (Extended Services) to maintain employment.

VR provides intensive SE and/or CE under a "place and train" model until employment stability is achieved for a period not to exceed 24 months. The individual then transitions into the Individual Employment Supports (IES) needed for job maintenance. The IES are provided by a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) or through natural support. VR will only utilize Supported or Customized Employment for individuals who will access IES through DD.

A team meeting would occur once the individual is stable in their job, and prior to transitioning to IES. The VR counselor will schedule the meeting

#### ***Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – Section 511***

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Section 511, employers are prohibited from compensating any individual with a disability who is 24 years of age or younger at subminimum wage, unless the individual has documentation from DVR of the following:

- Pre-employment transition services through Vocational Rehabilitation or secondary transition services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (Documentation of secondary transition services provided by the school system is transmitted to VR within 30 calendar days of completion or 60 days under extenuating circumstances)
- The individual was determined:
  - Ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services.
  - Eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, had an approved Individualized Plan for Employment, and the individual was unable to achieve an employment outcome in competitive integrated employment and the case is closed disability too severe and unable to benefit.
- Career counseling, along with information and referral to federal and state

programs to help the individual explore competitive integrated employment.

The VR Counselor will complete the SFN 1093 (Youth Seeking Subminimum Wage Employment) as soon as possible, but not later than 45 days upon completion of the three required activities. The necessary documentation of the required activities is provided to the individual or his/her guardian, who in turn would provide this to the employer.

- The employer must obtain, review, and verify the individual has completed the three required activities before the individual begins employment at subminimum wage.

**Note:** If an individual refuses to participate in the required activities, he or she cannot be employed in subminimum wage employment.

If an individual does not qualify, is no longer eligible for VR, or needs additional services, see Developmental Disabilities section.

### **Developmental Disabilities (DD)**

*To be eligible for the DD services a student must have met their educational requirements, no longer qualify or are not eligible for VR services and meet the following eligibility requirements:*

- Eligible for DD Program Management per NDAC 75-04-06; and
- Meet the ICF/IID level of care

Prior to authorizing any of these Waiver services, the DD Program Manager (DDPM) must verify that education requirements have been met and document accordingly in the individual's Overall Service Plan (OSP).

### ***DD Services***

- **Day Habilitation** services are scheduled activities, formalized training, and staff support typically provided in a non-residential setting to promote skill development for the acquisition, retention, or improvement in self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills. Activities should focus on improving a participant's sensorimotor, cognitive, communication and social interaction skills. The goal of this service is to enable the participant to attain or maintain his or her maximum physical, intellectual, emotional and social functional level. Day Habilitation services should facilitate, and foster community participation as indicated in each participant's person-centered service plan.

- ***Prevocational Services*** formalized training, experiences, and staff support designed to prepare participants for paid employment in integrated community settings. Services are structured to develop general abilities and skills that support employability in a work setting. Services may include training in effective communication within a work setting, workplace conduct and attire, following directions, attending to tasks, problem solving, and workplace safety.
- ***Small Group Employment Support Services*** provide long-term ongoing support to assist participants in maintaining paid employment in an integrated setting. Services include on- or off-the-job employment-related support for small groups of participants needing intervention to assist them in obtaining and maintaining employment as a group, in accordance with their person-centered service plan.
- ***Individual Employment Support Services*** provide long-term ongoing support to assist participants in maintaining paid employment in a competitive integrated setting or self-employment. Service includes on- or off-the-job employment-related support for participants needing intervention to assist them in obtaining or maintaining employment, in accordance with their person-centered service plan. This service is designed for participants who need intensive ongoing support to perform in a work setting.

**Department of Public  
Instruction**

600 E. Blvd. Ave. Dept. 201  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
(701) 328-2260

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

1000 E Divide Ave  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
(701) 328-8950 or  
(800) 755-2745

**Developmental Disabilities**

1237 W Divide Ave, Suite 1A  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
(701) 328-8930 or  
(800) 755-8529

# Graduation/Exit Checklist

## *School Aged Individuals ages 18-21*

The purpose of this checklist is to ensure an uninterrupted transition from secondary to adult services for students who graduate/exit high school before the age of 21, who are interested in receiving vocational and/or day service under the HCBS IID/DD Waiver. Due to the requirements of the 1915C IID/DD Home and Community Based Services Waiver, if the team feels a student has met all school district requirements and secondary transition services goals stated within his/her individual IEP and no longer benefits from additional special education and related services, the following items should be addressed.

- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 1. Has the student's IEP addressed all areas where skills were needed to make the biggest difference in his/her ultimate independence?

- ☐ The team supported the student in accessing opportunities to make choices and decisions, to explore and take risks, and to learn from experiences of success and failure?
- ☐ The team implemented support to encourage good grooming skills, good food choices and emphasized the importance of physical fitness, if appropriate.
- ☐ The team implemented support at school to help the student develop more independent and self/advocacy skills.
- ☐ Money management skills, as well as shopping and banking skills, were addressed with the student.
- ☐ Support was offered that promoted appropriate behavior at home, at school and socially.
- ☐ The student explored work in different settings either via virtual or in person.
- ☐ The student participated in volunteer opportunities, job shadowing or other activities to develop job skills.

Comments:

- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 2. Have all appropriate outside agencies been identified and involved as needed during high school programming

Comments:

- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 3. Is the summary of performance document completed that includes recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his/her post-secondary goals (e.g. information related to functional/academic performance, strengths, weaknesses and accommodation needed for continued success)?

Comments:

- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 4. Has the team identified adult education/training programs and residential placements as appropriate?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 5. Has the team explored vocational and adult living support needed after graduation?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 6. Has the student and his/her family applied for VR and/or DD support if needed?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 7. Has the student applied for Social Security benefits if applicable?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 8. Has the student applied for Medicaid benefits if applicable (Traditional Medicaid is required to access IID/DD Waiver Services)?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 9. Does the student have an original or certified copy of their birth certificate?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 10. Does the student have an Identification Card?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 11. Has the student applied for Housing if applicable?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 12. Has power of attorney for health care, power of financial attorney, medical directives and/or guardianship been addressed if applicable?  
Comments:
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** 13. Are there services or needs that the student requires that can no longer be provided in the educational setting?  
Comments:



☐ Yes ☐ No **Other Services or Needs required**

Explanation of Services/Needs required:

**After completing this document, information should be shared with VR and/or DD to assist in determining “next steps” relating to post-school services for the individual student.**