

ADULT AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES



Special Education Services

Special education services are mandated or required for all eligible students with disabilities in K-12 education. Services through adult agencies may have eligibility requirements and waitlists. Partnerships between the school, family, and agencies are an important aspect of the transition planning process.

IDEA requires that the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) include statements of interagency responsibilities or any linkages that are needed for the student to successfully transition (§300.347(b)(2)). For each student beginning at age 16 (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), a statement of needed transition services for the student, including, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages.

There are many agencies that serve youth and adults with disabilities. Some offer vocational and residential services, others provide personal support or financial assistance. State agencies have services available in most local communities throughout the state, however it is important to identify locally what is available in your community.

Agencies

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT -- WORKFORCE CENTERS

Workforce Centers offer numerous free services including work registration, job search and referrals, career guidance and counseling, interviewing, and networking skills, resume writing, training, and assessment. The Centers work closely with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to obtain more eligibility-based intensive services that may be needed by clients with disabilities. Find the nearest Workforce Center in your local phone book or [Colorado Workforce Center locator](#).

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES (DDS)

The Social Security Administration provides Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to persons who are disabled and unable to earn at or above a specified level of income from work. [Social Security Disability website](#). Individuals eligible for SSI Benefits must also fall below specified asset and resource limits. Additionally, healthcare coverage is accessed through these two benefits. SSI recipients access Medicaid, and SSDI Beneficiaries access Medicare. The Disability Determination Services (DDS) is the state agency that determines if an individual is disabled under the criteria prescribed by Social Security Administration. [Colorado Department of Human Services Disability Determination Services website](#).

SOCIAL SECURITY WORK INCENTIVE PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE (WIPA)

The WIPA program is a community-based organization that receives funding from the Social Security Administration to provide all Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries (including transition-to-work age youth) with FREE access to work incentive planning and assistance (also known as benefits counseling or benefits planning. [Social Security Work Incentives Planning and Assistance website](#). Ability Connection Colorado is the agency in Colorado approved to provide benefit counseling services through this Social Security Administration program. Certified Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWIC) working on the WIPA grant funding, must undergo high level security screening and benefits and work incentive training to provide this direct service and protect important beneficiary information. [Ability Connection Community Work Incentives Coordinators website](#).



DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DVR)

At age 15 students with disabilities can begin working with DVR to develop important employment skills that will lay a foundation for success after leaving school. Initial services with DVR focus on: exploring how skills and interests match with jobs available in the labor market, learning to express needs and goals in a variety of settings, learning skills necessary for success on the job, understanding training options to move forward on a specific career pathway, and providing real-life work activities. As a career pathway is solidified, DVR services become more specific to unique circumstances. Services received then depend upon the situation and type of support needed to achieve the employment goal. [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Services website.](#)

SCHOOL TO WORK ALLIANCE PROGRAM (SWAP)

SWAP is an optional, collaboratively funded program between school districts and DVR. The program serves youth that have mild to moderate needs in employment, are potentially eligible, applicants of or are eligible for DVR services, and need support in developing vocational awareness, career exploration and experiencing career and employment opportunities to become competitively employed. Referrals can be initiated by school staff or through a DVR office. To find out if SWAP is available in your area, talk to your special education staff or contact your local DVR office. [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.](#)

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CIL)

Centers for Independent Living (CILs): Centers for Independent Living provide a variety of services to persons with significant physical, mental, cognitive, or sensory disabilities of any age to help them live independently in their home, workplace, and community. The CILs are contracted by the Office of Independent Living Services at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide services to individuals with disabilities of all ages ([Independent Living Services website](#)). To find the CIL nearest to you, call the Office of Independent Living Services at 720-697-4794 or go to the Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) [Independent Living Center locator](#).

THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY LIVING IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH CARE POLICY AND FINANCING

The Office of Community Living is responsible for administering Medicaid long-term services and support, such as Home and Community Based Waivers, for people with physical disabilities and those with intellectual or developmental disabilities. These long-term services can support individuals with various incomes, ages, and disabilities to thrive at home and in their communities. The Office of Community Living works with private not-for-profit Case Management Agencies that are responsible for identifying the services individuals are eligible for and connecting them to qualified providers who can deliver those services. For students with a disability, it is crucial for parents to complete the eligibility determination process as soon as possible, even if they are unsure about the types of support their loved one may need. There are many services for individuals who are school-aged, and eligibility for adult services starts as early as age 14. Starting this process sooner can ensure students and their families get the support they need and help to smooth the transition from school to adult life. To get started, please support students and their families with contacting their local Case Management agency by following the link below.

- To identify the Case Management Agency for your area, visit the [Department of Healthcare Policy and Financing Case Management Agency Directory](#).
- To find further information on all services and supports for individuals with disabilities, please go



to the [Department of Healthcare Policy and Financing Programs for Individuals with Disabilities website](#).

THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

The Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) represents one of Colorado's many steps towards strategic investments in improving the behavioral health system. The BHA is a new cabinet member-led agency, housed within the Department of Human Services, designed to be the single entity responsible for driving coordination and collaboration across state agencies to address behavioral health needs. Because we believe all people in Colorado deserve to experience whole person health, we envision a world in which behavioral health services in Colorado are accessible, meaningful, and trusted. Therefore, we have made it our mission to co-create a people-first behavioral health system that meets the needs of all people in Colorado. For services nearest to you, refer to the website at [The Behavioral Health Administration website](#)

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

This agency is responsible for protecting and improving the health and environment for people in Colorado. Services are provided through local health departments and county nursing service agencies. Services available include nutrition, pre-natal care, drug and alcohol intervention, immunization, health management of chronic conditions, and family planning. For further information call 303-692-2000 or refer to [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment website](#).

COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (CCCS) AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

This state agency is responsible for secondary and postsecondary credentials, certificates, work-based learning, and degree programs that include Career and Technical Education (CTE). Services and support provided at secondary and postsecondary levels assist learners inclusive of those identified as special populations (which includes individuals with disabilities) to select and succeed in career pathways, technical training, work-based learning, credential, and certificate programs. [Colorado Career and Technical Education](#). Each of the statewide community college campuses and technical colleges has a Disability Services Coordinator on staff. [Colorado Community College System website](#)

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Coordinators of Disability Services are at most area technical colleges, community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities to assist students with disabilities in selecting courses and obtain the supports necessary to succeed in the postsecondary education setting. Students must contact the Office of Disability/Accessibility Services at the college and provide documentation of disability to request accommodation and/or services. For further information, contact your high school counselor, special education teacher, or the college/university. Additional information can be found at the [Colorado Department of Higher Education-services for students with disabilities webpage](#).

Sample Questions to Ask

Once you have identified agencies that may possibly provide services to your child or student, the following questions may be helpful in gathering and clarifying the information you will need to make a referral. Based on the agency, and the needs of the individual, some questions may not apply.

- What services for families and youth does your agency provide?



- What are the eligibility requirements to receive services with your agency?
- How old does an individual need to be to apply for and receive your services?
- Is there a waiting list for your services?
- Is there a fee for any services offered?
- Do you provide work readiness, employment readiness or career readiness evaluations of any kind?
- Do I have a choice in who I get assigned to?
- Are there multilingual options? Are multiple languages spoken and/or written in your agency?
- What other types of daily living support does your agency provide?
- Do you offer individual or family mental health/wellness counseling? Career counseling?
- What information and documentation are required in order to apply for services?
- What is my role and level of involvement when choosing your agency's services?
- What resources can I find online? Are there tools I can access online or virtually?
- Can I contact, communicate, and access services at your agency online/virtually or is everything in-person?
- Do you provide guidance for gaining more employability skills?
- Do you provide financial assistance toward job training or postsecondary education?
- Do you offer tutoring and other academic/study skills?
- Do you provide job placement support?
- Do you provide on-the-job training at the agency or somewhere else?
- Do you provide transportation/supports to assist in transportation, such as a bus pass, gas card or other?
- Do you provide childcare?
- Do you provide professional clothing I could rent, borrow, or have?

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

[Colorado Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services Unit](#)

[Colorado Department of Education Transition School to Adult Life website](#)