



The Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the state's lead agency serving individuals with disabilities.

DRS works in partnership with people with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities.

DRS is committed to provide services that ensure youth with disabilities have the knowledge, skills, and experience they need to successfully transition into the world of work.

IDHS/DRS' Transition Initiatives for Youth include:

- Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP)
- Interagency Collaboration
- Education Services offered through three schools
- NEXT STEPS

For more information

about DRS services for youth with disabilities, contact:

Illinois Department of Human Services
Division of Rehabilitation Services
P. O. Box 19429
Springfield, Illinois 62704

877-761-9780 (Voice)
866-264-2149 (TTY)
312-957-4881 (VP)

drs.illinois.gov/success

www.dhs.state.il.us

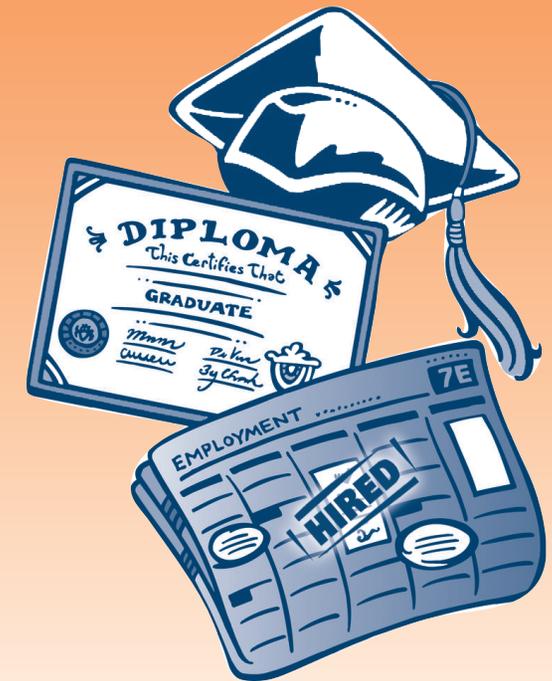


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Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities



DRS collaborates with many partners throughout the state to offer a continuum of coordinated transition services designed to help students with disabilities become productive, self-sufficient adults. Many of these services are provided in cooperation with local high schools.

■ ■ ■ ELIGIBILITY

Individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities, ages 14 1/2 through 21, may be eligible for Transition Services.

■ ■ ■ STEP

DRS works in close cooperation with local schools to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (PTS) to students with disabilities in Illinois. As defined by federal law, PTS includes:

- Job Exploration Counseling;
- Work-Based Learning Experiences;
- Counseling on Post-Secondary Education;
- Workplace Readiness Training; and
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy.

In STEP work-based learning experiences include in-school and work site training options, including internships, with the goal of having an employer paid job in an integrated setting in the community.

■ ■ ■ INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

DRS joins with partners at the state, regional, and local level to provide and coordinate services for students with disabilities that help them transition into adult life.

State Level ■ ■ ■

The Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS/DRS), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (IDCEO), and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) are the CORE partners across the State and work together to provide transition services and develop work opportunities for students with disabilities.

Regional Level ■ ■ ■

DRS is responsible for coordinating and sustaining local Transition Planning Committees (TPCs) in Illinois. These TPCs identify existing resources and unmet needs, facilitate an ongoing exchange of information, and develop local customer training programs.

Local Level ■ ■ ■

DRS also funds collaborative employment services from adult Community Rehabilitation Programs and collaborates with Centers for Independent Living for the provision of legal rights consultation for individuals with disabilities and their families.

■ ■ ■ EDUCATION SERVICES

DRS operates three residential schools for children and youth with disabilities. All educational and social programs in these schools are designed to prepare students for successful living as independent, self-supporting citizens who are actively involved in their communities.

- The **Illinois School for the Deaf** (Jacksonville) provides comprehensive, accredited programming for children and youth who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, including a birth to three years of age; preschool; as well as elementary, junior high school and high school academic programs.
- The **Illinois School for the Visually Impaired** (Jacksonville) provides accredited educational and related services to children who are blind or visually impaired from birth to three years of age through preschool, elementary, and high school.
- The **Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education – Roosevelt** (Chicago) provides elementary, secondary, and transition programs for students with severe physical disabilities.

The **NEXT STEPS** program provides training and support to parents and caregivers of children with disabilities, assisting them in planning, advocating, and identifying resources. NEXT STEPS trainers, volunteer teams, and workshops model the philosophy of collaboration among parents, self-advocates, and professionals.