

Transition Guide

2015

BUILDING A BRIDGE TO YOUR FUTURE



LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Special Thanks To:
John Ryan, Devonna, Anil, Michele,
John, Raquel and Billy

Some of the young adults who appear on the cover have successfully transitioned to adult life; others continue on their journey.

Mrs. Filmyer, a mother whose son has already transitioned, knows that communication is both verbal and non-verbal. Her advice to parents is to listen to their child's verbal and non-verbal signals when planning for transition to adult life. Encourage your child to be part of the process. Remember, it's hard work to get started but the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

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We are happy to present the new Transition Guide for families and their children who have a diagnosis of intellectual disability and are preparing to transition from the educational to the adult system. We hope this information will help individuals to live and work in the community .

Some of the systems that families must navigate are: the Montgomery County Office of Developmental Disabilities, the County Assistance Office (CAO), the Social Security Office, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Additionally, there are non-governmental organizations that provide various types of free assistance, such as Visiting Nurses Association and Disability Rights Network. Each system has its own unique set of requirements, services and procedures.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR SERVICES WITH THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The Montgomery County Office of Developmental Disabilities is a county operated governmental organization. In order to receive services, families and individuals must register by contacting the Intake Coordinator. In addition, individuals must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- A diagnosis of intellectual disability prior to the age of 22
- Full-scale IQ of 70 or below
- Significant limitations in adaptive functioning skills

Once you are determined eligible for services, an Intake Meeting will be scheduled by the Intake Coordinator. At the meeting, you will choose a Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) and they will assign a Supports Coordinator to you. A Supports Coordinator (SC) will work with you to develop a plan and coordinate the services to support your goals. Your Supports Coordinator will be glad to discuss services that are available through the intellectual disability system such as Employment Supports, Habilitation, Respite, Day Services, Transportation, Residential Services and Vehicle Adaptations.

**Office of Developmental Disabilities
Intake Coordinator: 610-278-5666
Human Services Center
1430 DeKalb Street
Norristown, PA 19404-0311**

For more information about services and providers visit <https://www.montco.org/DocumentCenter/View/6147> and <http://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View8176>.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, a state governmental organization, is responsible for helping persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment.

There is emphasis on “**Employment**” as a **First Option** for individuals with intellectual disabilities. This is particularly important as the country moves to full inclusion of persons with disabilities into the workforce and community. The Montgomery County Office of Developmental Disabilities (DD) encourages individuals to make employment supports and services a *1st choice*. It is recognized that individuals with disabilities need on-going, comprehensive supports and services to become employed and stay employed. OVR can provide these supports to eligible individuals. To apply for OVR services contact the Intake Counselor or ask your Supports Coordinator for help in obtaining an application.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

1875 New Hope Street

Norristown, PA 19401

484-250-4340 or (800) 221-1042

OVR services are short-term, generally for a 90 day period; after this time period, the Office of Developmental Disabilities can help by providing the supports and services you may need to continue your career. However, you must be registered with the Office of Developmental Disabilities to receive ongoing employment services. Services are provided by Job Coaching Agencies. For more information on job coaching agencies, visit <https://www.montco/DocumentCenter/View/6147>.

OVR also provides secondary education to qualified persons at the Hiram G. Andrews Centers, Johnstown, PA. The Center provides a comprehensive program offering campus dormitory living, health services, degreed and diploma programs.

Get the facts ... Some individuals believe that benefits will be terminated when employed and this prevents them from pursuing employment. Your overall financial position usually improves when you work and in many cases you can continue to receive benefits. To understand your situation, the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA), administered by Disability Rights Network, offers individualized benefits counseling. See page 5 for information on benefits counseling.



How to Apply for Medical Assistance

The Montgomery County Medical Assistance Office is known as the County Assistance Office (CAO) and is a state governmental organization. It is important to apply for MA because services offered through the Office of Developmental Disabilities are an extension of MA benefits. More familiar MA benefits are healthcare services such as physician visits, dental care and mental health services. These services may be covered by private insurance and Medical Assistance. Also, your private or employment insurance co-pays may be covered by MA.

To obtain benefits you may apply:

- online at www.compass.state.pa.us (the fastest and easiest method)
- by visiting the local office in Norristown
- by downloading a paper application and mailing to CAO

**Montgomery County
Assistance Office
Norristown District 1
1931 New Hope Street
Norristown, PA 19401
Toll free 1-877-398-5571
Or 610-270-3500**



How to Apply for Social Security

Social Security is a federal government social insurance program available to retired, disabled and financially needy persons. To receive benefits, you must apply to Social Security. There are several benefit allowances available for persons with disabilities such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Retirement Benefits (SSA) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

A disabled person must be financially needy to receive SSI. A disabled person can receive SSDI benefits based on their own work record or a parent's work record. An adult with a disability, diagnosed prior to 18-years old, can collect benefits if a parent is collecting Social Security income or if a parent is deceased. To access further information contact the Social Security Administration.

**Social Security Administration
1700 Markley Street, 1st Floor
Norristown, PA 19401
1-800-772-1213
www.socialsecurity.gov**



Disability Rights Network of PA (DRN)

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)

Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania (DRN) operates the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program. The DRN is a statewide, non-profit, corporation that protects the civil rights of adults and children with disabilities.

The WIPA Program is a free service for individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance and /or Supplemental Security Income who are between the ages of 18 and 64 and their families. The benefits coordinator will help you understand work rules and regulations to access benefits.

A coordinator can discuss with you:

- The effect of employment on your benefits
- The work incentives to maximize your income and health care options
- How to participate in the Ticket to Work Program application process
- The Employment Job Coaching Agencies that are available

Disability Rights Network
Tyra Virden,
Work Incentive Coordinator
1315 Walnut Street, Ste. 500
Philadelphia PA 19107
(215) 238-8070, X. 216
tvirden@drnpa.org



Visiting Nurse Association Community Services

(VNA) Personal Navigator Program

Applying for benefits can be overwhelming, confusing and time-consuming. Another concern is many governmental organizations encourage you to initially submit your application online. Pew Research found that this is a challenge for non-users of technology. The Visiting Nurse Association, through their Personal Navigator Program, offers **free** help to complete documentation for 22 separate benefits. The Navigator can help you apply for the following and more:

- Social Security Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicare and Medicaid
- Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities
- Child Care
- Personal Emergency Response Services
- Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol treatment

A client or family member must call the VNA Community Services, Inc. Personal Navigator Program to schedule an appointment with a navigator. The navigator will personally submit the online paperwork to connect eligible individuals to benefits. There are four site locations for your convenience which include Abington, Norristown, Pottstown and Colmar. For additional program information, or to determine if you qualify for benefits, contact the VNA

VNA Community Services, Inc.
Personal Navigator Program
1-800-591-8234
info@vnacs.org

Know Your Day Options

Individuals and their families may want to explore various day providers to determine if the services and activities are a good fit. This will give you an opportunity to compare how the providers assist you to further your level of independence to live and work in the community. These providers can be explored during the IEP transition years. Contact providers to schedule visits. Being prepared helps the decision making process go quicker when funding becomes available.

A list of providers is available at <http://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/6147>.

Supported Employment	Transition Employment	Licensed Day Programs <u>Two Types</u> Pre-vocational Program Adult Training Facilities (ATF)	Non-traditional Day Programs
<p>Individual has one-on-one assistance by job coach to obtain and keep competitive work.</p> <p>Individual earns minimum wage or more.</p> <p>Individual and employer may receive ongoing follow-up assistance by job coach.</p> <p>Individual is usually not supervised during all work hours.</p> <p>Individual works with non-disabled co-workers.</p>	<p>A <i>job coach</i> provides instructions at all times.</p> <p>Individuals with disabilities work in groups.</p> <p>Work occurs at businesses with non-disabled individuals.</p> <p>Minimum wage is generally received but is not required.</p>	<p>The various Pre-Vocs and ATF Providers can offer unique activities.</p> <p>A <i>Direct Care Professional</i> assists at all times.</p> <p>Both types of programs occur at facilities and may or may not include community participation.</p> <p>Individuals at Pre-Voc earn sub-minimum wage by doing contract work; earnings are based on how much work is done.</p> <p>Individuals at ATF's learn self-help skills, arts and crafts.</p>	<p>A <i>Direct Care Professional</i> provides instruction and supervision.</p> <p>Can participate as a small group or individually in activities such as volunteering and social events.</p> <p>Transportation is provided.</p> <p>Activities are individualized according to interests.</p>

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

Age 14-15

- * If you are not registered by age 14 contact the Office of Developmental Disabilities. You may register as early as 3 years of age.
- * Invite your Supports Coordinator to your Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) Transition meetings

Age 16-17

- * Invite Supports Coordinator to IEP Transition Meeting
- * Contact Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) if graduating at 18
- * Invite OVR counselor to your IEP Transition Meeting

Age 18

- * Invite Supports Coordinator to IEP Transition Meeting
- * Contact Social Security Office for eligibility and benefits
- * Contact County Assistance Office (CAO) for medical and other benefits eligibility. It is necessary to register once you're 18 although you may have registered when you were under age 18. At age 18 you're legally an adult and prior to that age you're a child.
- * Males need to complete selective services registration
- * Register to vote
- * Contact Workforce Benefits Coordinator (DRN-WIPA) if graduating at age 18
- * Contact expert on estate planning and special needs trusts

Age 19-20

- * Continue to invite SC to IEP Transition Meeting
- * Contact the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation if you are graduating at age 21
- * Invite OVR counselor to your IEP meeting
- * Contact Social Security and County Assistance Office if not completed at a prior time

Age 21

- * Contact Office of Developmental Disabilities, County Assistance Office, Social Security and OVR if not completed at a prior time
- * Invite SC and OVR counselor to your IEP meeting
- * Last year youth is entitled to education services
- * Transition to adult health care provider
- * Contact private insurance company for policy on continuing coverage

Additional Resources:

The **Secondary Transition** website provides youth, young adults, parents and professionals with secondary transition resources to assist with the transition to post-secondary goals such as education, employment and community living. <http://www.secondarytransition.org/>

The **Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network (PYLN)** is a team of youth leaders with disabilities from across PA with a purpose to develop self-determination, empowerment and leadership of youth to promote successful post school outcome. <http://www.pyln.org/>

Think College is a comprehensive website about college programs throughout the US for individuals with intellectual disabilities. <http://www.thinkcollege.net/>

The **Institute on Disabilities at Temple University** is the PA University for Excellence in developmental disabilities education, research and services. There are 20+ programs including information on assistive technology and updated material on the intellectual disabilities system in PA. <http://www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities/>

PA Department of Health “Transition Health Care Checklist” is a resource to help youth successfully transition to adult living that includes health, financial, legal and many additional issues. <http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/file.php?source=presentations&sourceFile=healthcare>

PA Assistive Technology foundation (PATF) provides education and financing opportunities for people with disabilities and older Pennsylvania to acquire assistive technology devices and services to improve quality of life issues. <https://patf.us/>

This guide provides **information on managing your money**, instead of letting your money manage you. https://patf.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/PATF_FinanceBooklet_2ndEd-2013-10-4-2013-FINAL-FINAL-FINAL.pdf

The **Policy Information Exchange (PIE)** informs and educates Pennsylvanians with disabilities, their families and the general public about policy issues at the federal, state and local level. http://www.thearcpa.org/what_we_do/pie.html

The **LEAD Center** is a collaborative of disabilities, workforce and economic empowerment organizations dedicated to advancing individual and systems change to improve economic self-sufficiency for all people across the spectrum of disability. <http://www.leadcenter.org/>

PEAL Center helps families and individuals with disabilities with special education information, face-to-face, online trainings and workshops on issues related to disabilities. Visit the website to receive newsletter and learn about the Annual Conference. <http://pealcenter.org/>

Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care (PCHC) provides health care education for individuals with intellectual disabilities, their families and staff. <https://www.pchc.org/>

Local and State Transition Events and Meetings

There are local and state transition events for individuals with intellectual disabilities, their families, and professionals. The purpose of these events is to promote successful transition for young adults and their families. Providers of services, governmental organizations and other experts are available to talk to you and provide presentations on postsecondary education, community participation, housing options, healthy lifestyle, estate planning and employment.

The Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) - Fall and Spring Transition Expos

The Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Transition sponsors a fall and a spring ***Transition to Life Resources Expo*** for youth with intellectual disabilities, autism and mental illness. ***The Expo will be on Thursday, November 19, 2016.*** Local provider agencies, governmental organizations, fitness companies, social organizations, camps, colleges and other post-secondary education programs provide personalized expertise to you and your family. Contact Matthew Harris @maharris@mciu.org or 484-808-2132.

There is also a ***Local Coordinating Council*** that works to promote effective transition for students with disabilities. The council is made up of parents, schools, provider agencies, businesses, and parents. Contact Matthew Harris @maharris@mciu.org or 484-808-2132 if you are interested in attending.

The Montgomery County Office of Developmental Disabilities

The Montgomery County Office of Developmental Disabilities offers seminars and trainings each year for young adults, their families and professionals. If you have additional training requests, please contact Trish Golden at pgolden@montcopa.org or 610-278-3645

Social Security Seminars

Michael Walling, national expert on social security and other benefits, offers a seminar on ***Maximizing Your Income***. Mike will present on Thursday, December 3, 2015. Please visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Montgomery-County-Dept-of-Behavioral-Health-and-Developmental-Disabilities/223611657675855?fref=ts> or <http://www.montcopa.org/> or contact Trish Golden at pgolden@montcopa.org or 610-278-3645 to register.

Lifesharing

Each year our office hosts a Lifesharing event to learn about this residential option. Date for 2016 to be determined. Providers share information on how it works and families present on the successes their loved ones experience with this nurturing environment. Please contact Jackie Grimes at jgrimes@montcopa.org or 610-278-1452 for more information.

Registration, Eligibility and Services

We offer free presentation on registration, eligibility and services to schools, parent groups and other interested parties in Montgomery County. We are available during the day and evening. To schedule your presentation please call Lauren Foell at lfoell@montcopa.org or 610-278-3672.

Developmental Disabilities Committee

You are cordially invited to attend the Developmental Disabilities Committee meeting on the 4th Monday of the month at 6:30 pm. This committee promotes the development of quality services for individuals with disabilities by considering issues relating to the county program. Please contact Gerry Feeny at gfeeny@montcopa.org or 610-292-5040 to find out meeting dates.



Pennsylvania Community on Transition Conference at the Penn State Conference Center

The Transition Conference will be held on July 20—22, 2016 at the Penn State Conference Center and Hotel State College, PA. There are breakout sessions offering sessions on social security, job coaching, smart technology, state governmental updates on policies and the direction of services. Scholarships are available to family and youth to cover registration fees and hotel expenses. Conference registration is available online after May 15 at www.secondarytransition.org and www.pattan.net. You may call Patty Panuccio at PaTTAN-Pittsburg at 800-446-5607, Ext. 6841 or ppanuccio@pattan.net for registration information.

Association of People Supporting Employment....APSE

An Employment Conference is held annually and is sponsored by the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE). The conference focuses on community employment of people with disabilities. Businesses, local and national community leaders present on state-of-the-art strategies to ensure equitable employment for citizens with disabilities. The 2016 conference will be in Charlotte, NC at the Omni Hotel on June 22 - 25, 2016. Visit www.apse.org or call 301-279-0060 for information.

Families CCAN

Families CCAN is a group of families of adults with disabilities who are working to find innovative solutions for employment, housing and community living for their adult family members. Monthly meetings are held on educational programs and networking opportunities for parents, professionals and agencies. Families CCAN is sponsoring a day-long conference, **“Solving the Housing Crisis for Adults with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities: Challenges, Opportunities and Innovation” on October 14, 2015**, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at Houston Hall at Perelman Quadrangle, University of Pennsylvania, 3417 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA. For further information contact Sara Crimm at saracrimm.familiesccan@gmail.com or 215.280.2758 or Amy Lutz at amy@easifoundation.org or 610.308.5548. Also get on our active parent listserv. *New Members and Guests are Welcome to Families CCAN.*



**Montgomery County
Office of Developmental Disabilities**

**Montgomery County Human Services Center
1430 DeKalb Street—PO Box 311
Norristown PA 19404-0311
Phone: 610-278-3642
Fax: 610-278-3683**

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