

ENTERING THE WORLD OF WORK
A Guide to Employment Programs
For Adults with Disabilities
in Alexandria, Arlington,
Fairfax & Falls Church



Providing Opportunities, Information, Networking
and Transition Support

Produced for the Transition POINTS Program
of The Arc of Northern Virginia

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This guide is one of six developed for parents of children with intellectual disabilities under the auspices of The Arc of Northern Virginia's Transition POINTS program. Transition POINTS focuses on key life decision points: receiving a diagnosis and having a child with a disability enter an early intervention program; starting school; transitioning out of the school system; securing employment; finding a place to live outside the caregiver's home; and aging with a disability.

All of the guides can be found at <http://www.thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/transition-points>

The printed version of this guide is prepared periodically. As information changes, updated information may be found in the Employment Guide Toolkit on our website. If you would like to be notified of changes, contact dmonnig@thearcofnova.org to be added to a distribution list.

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** For additional Resources, including:

Attorneys Specializing in Special Needs Trusts

Selected List of Support Coordinators for Waivers for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, visit The Arc of Northern Virginia's Employment Toolkit at <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/entering-world-work/employment-toolbox/>

INTRODUCTION

Developmental disabilities (DD) by definition last a lifetime, so caring for a loved one with DD is a lifelong responsibility. Because of the nature of these disabilities, caregivers must make crucial (and often very difficult) decisions throughout the lifespan of their loved one—where he or she will go to school, what they will do for recreation, where they will live, and how to ensure his or her financial security once the caregiver is no longer there.

While caregivers want to make the best choices for their loved one, research shows that many do not have the resources to do so. A national survey by The Arc found many families struggling to help their loved one with an intellectual disability:

- 80% of families surveyed don't have enough money for needed care and almost half report having more care giving responsibilities than they can handle
- 85% report that their adult family member with ID/DD was not employed either full- or part-time
- 62% of families don't have a long-term care plan
- 75% can't find after school care, community services or summer activities for their loved one
- 59% report they don't have enough information to make good choices about housing options
- 65% report that they don't have enough help in planning for the future.¹

About Transition POINTS

Families need realistic, actionable information with which they can make a wide range of decisions as their child grows up. Providing this information is the mission of a program of The Arc of Northern Virginia—Transition POINTS (Providing Opportunities, Information, Networking and Transition Support).

Transition POINTS focuses on six key decision points in the lifetime of an individual with an intellectual disability:

1. Receiving a diagnosis and having a child enter an early intervention program
2. Starting school and entering the special education system

3. Transitioning out of the school system and into adult services;
4. Entering the world of work;
5. Finding a place to live outside the caregiver's home; and
6. Aging with a disability.

For each transition point, we provide materials in both print and digital formats, online resources, workshops, podcasts, and webinars.

Help for You, the Parent

As a first step in Transition POINTS, we have written six guides to address important issues that parents should consider at each of these important life stages. The guides are designed to help you recognize opportunities, weigh options, and work through decisions; checklists, timelines, worksheets, and links to other resources are included wherever possible. Each document has also been reviewed by a task force of parents and professionals with relevant experience and expertise.

Although each guide addresses issues related to a specific phase of life, you'll note that each also repeats some information parents and caregivers need to know whether their loved one is two, 22 or 62 years old: which steps to take to protect your loved one's financial future, how to apply for benefits, and where to go for more help.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

This is not a legal document and does not spell out your or your child's rights and responsibilities under the law. Every effort has been made to verify the information in the document, but please be aware that items such as program regulations, deadlines, and contact information can change.

Referrals to organizations and individuals are for informational purposes and do not constitute an endorsement of their services.

¹ Anderson, L.L., Larson, S.A., & Wuorio, A. (2011). 2010 FINDS National Survey Technical Report Family Caregiver Survey. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Research and Training Center on Community Living.

ENTERING THE WORLD OF WORK: A Guide to Finding & Keeping a Job For Transitioning Youth

“Work is good,” says Richard Luecking in his book about supporting work experiences for youth with disabilities.¹ Work builds self-confidence and self-esteem, teaches valuable skills, grows an individual’s community of support, and sets the stage for the next job! Research supports starting early to get an idea of what a young person may wish to do in terms of a job or career.

Unfortunately, finding appropriate and fulfilling employment for individuals with disabilities can be daunting. U.S. Department of Labor statistics show that less than one-fifth of adults with any disability are employed, and many of those do not have full-time jobs.² Moreover, statistics account only for people who are available to work and are actively looking for a job, not those who may have given up, lack training, or are facing major obstacles to looking for work.

The best defense against these obstacles is a good offense: preparation, preparation, preparation. This guide emphasizes preparing the middle and high school student with developmental disabilities for the world of work. See the “Checklist...” on page 4 for a timeline of what to do when.

For the most part, the audience for “Entering the World of Work” is parents who are supporting their young adult with disabilities through the transition from school to work. Some information (particularly in sections about preparing for a particular job) is directed to the young adult him or herself.

Key issues covered in the guide are:

When to start preparing for entry into the workforce. Planning for jobs starts early before a student gets out of school. Luecking suggests starting as early as middle school with visits to workplaces, volunteer activities, volunteering, internships, and job shadowing to expose a young adult to the world of work. Eliminating possible jobs is as important as focusing on desired ones.

¹Richard G. Luecking, *The Way to Work: How to Facilitate Work Experiences for Youth in Transition* (Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2009) pg 1

²U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic New Release, “Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics, 2012.” June 12, 2013.

Who offers short term and long term employment support services in your area. If your student with DD is found eligible for adult services, localities may offer vocational testing, as well as help in finding, training for, and getting support on the job. A first meeting with DARS (Department of Aging & Rehabilitative Services) should occur three years before graduation. This guide provides resources for employment services in this area and reviews funding options for the various services.

What you need to know to prepare for and stay on the job. This guide offers tips for filling out job applications, interviewing and appropriate worksite behavior, sample resumes, and some ideas for self-advocacy on the job. You may also get help from your DARS counselor or employment service organization.

How he or she will get around. Transporting to and from work continues to pose barriers to people with disabilities. However, travel training for persons with disabilities is available in all three localities. In addition, local transportation companies (including bus, subway, and taxis) in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax offer programs to increase convenience and reduce the cost of transportation.

Whether working will affect your child’s benefits.

If your child is receiving SSI and Medicaid, earning income from a job may affect his or her benefits. Be sure to check the section “Keeping Your Benefits While Working” to protect those benefits.

What steps to take now to protect your loved one’s financial future.

If you haven’t already done so, now is a good time to make or review your will, create a Special Needs Trust, and set up a filing system to keep records that could affect employment, benefits, and any inheritance you wish your child to receive.

Your Rights in the Workplace

Title I of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), originally passed by Congress in 1990, prohibits discrimination in recruiting, hiring, setting salaries, promoting, or training of individuals with disabilities. It restricts questions that can be asked about an applicant's disability before a job offer is made, and it requires that employers make reasonable accommodation for the known limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities (unless

it results in undue hardship).

To be protected by the ADA, you must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or have a history or record of such an impairment, or be a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

The ADA only protects you if you are **qualified** for the job you want. You must meet job-related requirements (for example, education, training, or skills requirements). You must be able to perform the job's essential functions (i.e., its fundamental duties) with or without a reasonable accommodation.

Your employer¹ must make sure that you:

- have an equal opportunity to apply for jobs and to work in jobs for which you are qualified;
- have an equal opportunity to be promoted once you are working;
- have equal access to benefits and privileges of employment that are offered to other employees, such as employer-provided health insurance or training; and
- are not harassed because of your disability.

For more information on disclosing your disability during the job interview and on "reasonable accommodations," see section on "Interviewing for a Job."

Rehabilitation Act

The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, in programs receiving federal financial assistance, in federal employment, and in the employment practices of federal contractors. The standards for determining employment discrimination under the Rehabilitation Act are the same as those used in Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Filing a Complaint

Charges of employment discrimination on the basis of disability may be filed at any U.S. Equal Employment

Opportunity Commission (EEOC) field office. Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the date of discrimination, or 300 days if the charge is filed with a designated state or local fair employment practice agency. Contact:

EEOC
Washington DC Field Office
131 M Street, NE
Fourth Floor, Suite 4NWO2F
Washington, DC 20507-0100
www.eeoc.gov

Role of Parents & Families in Supporting the Work Experience

Parents and other family members play a key role in preparing their son or daughter with DD for the workplace and in supporting them once on the job.

First, you know your loved one better than anyone else and are therefore an important source of information and long-term support.

Second, the IDEA gives parents certain rights in the special education process, such as the right to approve their student's IEP (which would include transition and employment-related goals); IEP meetings in middle- and high school, for example, are golden opportunities to participate in setting goals and talking about ways for your child to get services such as vocational assessments, life skills training, or even work experiences while still in school.

Third, evidence suggests that high parental expectations and sustained involvement throughout the transition process results in more success in the workplace for youth with disabilities.

The next section discusses basic steps in the process of preparing for, obtaining and keep a job. Parents play a vital role in each step. Look at the box under each step to see ways you could support your child and his/her progress toward workplace success.

**Entering the World of Work:
A Checklist for Parents & Individuals with Disabilities**

Step to Take by Age	Estate/Legal	Employment/ Community Day Services	Transportation
ASAP			
Create file for key documents	x		
Have a will drawn up for parents	x		
Create a Special Needs Trust	x		
Explore eligibility for Medicaid waivers: Get on wait list(s).	MAY BE	LONG WAIT	LIST
Middle School			
Keep record of child's aptitudes & vocational interests		x	
Find out about high school academic & vocational courses that support career goals		x	
Begin participating in activities that could teach/reinforce work skills & expectations (chores, volunteering, etc.)		x	
9th Grade (14)			
Begin including transition goals in IEP, including vocational ones		x	x
If using public transit, obtain Metro reduced-fare ID or MetroAccess cards			x
Explore eligibility for adult services with local school system or CSB; fill out application & release of information forms		x	
10-11th Grade (15-16)			
Ask high school transition coordinator about vocational/job preparedness programs available after high school		x	
Arrange 1st meeting with DARS (typically 3 years before exiting the school system) and establish eligibility for services			
If eligible for DARS, investigate need for vocational assessments and explore programs like PERT		x	
Explore possible careers by getting a part-time job or getting non-paid work experiences like volunteering or internships; create a resume		x	
Explore community resources for adult services: employment service organizations, vocational programs, transition programs		x	
Explore post-secondary options		x	
12th grade (17-18)			
Add specific vocational-related goals to transition IEP		x	
With your transition coordinator, apply for any post-high school vocational programs		x	
Determine eligibility for funding for adult services (including employment services after graduation) through appropriate local agency		x	
Continue working or doing volunteer work; update resume with each new activity or skill		x	
Learn Self-Advocacy Skills		x	

**Entering the World of Work:
A Checklist for Parents & Individuals with Disabilities**

12th grade (continued)	Estate/Legal	Employment/ Community Day Services	Transportation
If not yet prepared for employment, explore transition programs, vocational and life skill programs.		x	
No earlier than 17 yrs., 6 months			
Explore legal authority such as power of attorney, guardianship or other options. Contact attorney.	x		
Month of 18th birthday			
Determine if adult with disability qualifies for SSI	x		
1 month before 18th birthday			
Have attorney prepare final documents for new legal relationship	x		
Age 18			
Update will. Inform family about wills, trusts, guardianship	x		
Apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	x		
Once accepted for SSI, apply for Medicaid.	x		
If graduate and exit school system at 18			
If working with DARS, continue with job development & placement		x	
If have a job, work with a benefits counselor if needed to manage income and benefits		x	
If not already done, determine eligibility for Medicaid waivers	x		
If not yet done, obtain Metro reduced-rate transit farecards/ID card			x
If remain in school system until 22			
Continue to add/modify employment-related goals in IEP			
Participate in school-based vocational program, including working in community-based settings			
If working with DRS, choose an employment service provider & start job development		x	
Age 22 (out of school system)			
Continue with job placement activities until find a job; after DARS, job coaching may be funded by local CSB funds, Medicaid Waiver, or privately by family		x	

TAKING THE FIRST STEPS

Figuring out what to do for a job or career is a challenge for every young adult. You may already know what jobs you'd be good at (or what you really *don't* want to do), but most young adults are not very familiar with what it takes to prepare for and get a job.

It takes time to figure this all out. Parents and students should take these steps and get started in middle and high school thinking about work and work-related skills:

Get some kind of work-type experience Be creative in thinking about what you/your child already does and how that might teach job skills or be expanded into a career interest.

Using your own experiences, **start a list of what you have done and what you did or did not like about it.** Use the Positive Personal Profile as a guide to assessing what you can offer an employer and what you may need to be successful. The profile can then guide more formal career/aptitude assessments in school or through DARS.

Meet with your transition coordinator at your high school Find out about high school-to-adult services programs in your locality. Begin adding work-related transition goals into your IEP (see suggestions on page 8).

You or your student's transition coordinator should **arrange an initial meeting with a counselor from the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and your employment service organizations (ESOs).**

If eligible, **begin working with your DARS counselor** and an employment service organization.

Step 1. Getting Work Experience

Most people begin learning about the world of work through a variety of non-paid experiences. By participating in a variety of these activities, you and your child will begin to sort out which jobs might be a good fit for his or her skills, as well as which ones definitely would not.

Chores Probably the first "job" most children have,

chores teach discipline, teamwork, and (perhaps) conflict resolution. Youngsters may also find they enjoy certain chores--cooking, taking care of a pet, or working in the garden--that may point them in the direction of a career.

School, camp, summer courses Taking courses in school or during the summer help young adults to learn skills as varied as computer repair, typing and data entry, animal care, or web graphics.

Volunteering From distributing meals to the homebound to cleaning a park or working in an animal shelter, volunteering provides a sense of personal accomplishment while teaching job skills.

Activities at church or synagogue Participating in religious education classes, being a greeter for or taking part in religious services, or being part of mission programs all provide opportunities to develop responsibility as well as social and job-related skills.

Scouting can provide many of the basic skills needed for workplace success: team-work, goal setting, task management, time management, and leadership.

Sports teaches not only the sport itself but self-advocacy, sportsmanship, teamwork, discipline and self-care skills.

Advice from a Parent

The transition out of school comes before parents are aware it has happened.

- **Plan in advance** Allow a two-year cushion before transition to research the process itself.
 - **Research employment organizations** and interview those appropriate for your young adult.
 - **Visit potential employment providers** This is essential: see the site itself, observe the employees in action, as well as their relationship with their supervisors. The site should provide an environment for success and growth.
 - **Take nothing for granted** Be diligent. Nothing is guaranteed until the individual is actually employed.
 - **Anticipate problems** They will happen, but anticipating them will reduce your stress and that of your family.
-

For volunteer experiences, explore the following:

Volunteer Match

www.volunteermatch.org

Volunteer Alexandria

Phone: (703) 836-2176

Web: <http://www.volunteeralexandria.org/>

Volunteer Arlington

Phone: (703) 228-1760

Web: <http://www.arlingtonva.us/volunteer>

Volunteer Fairfax/Falls Church

Phone: (703) 246-3460

Web: <http://www.volunteerfairfax.org>

How Parents May Help

- ✓ Start early to talk about the benefits of working and workplace expectations
- ✓ Bring your child with you to your place of work
- ✓ Give him or her household chores
- ✓ Help find volunteer activities
- ✓ Encourage participation in activities such as Special Olympics or Scouting
- ✓ Talk about dreams and hopes for the future (even if not job related).

Step 2. Assessing Work Interests, Preferences & Skills

Use the Positive Personal Profile to get an overall picture of what you'd like to do for a job or career and what talents, traits and skills you'd bring to the workplace. This is the place to be honest about likes and dislikes and about any accommodations or support you might need at the worksite.

Consider looking at resources such as *What Color is Your Parachute* for lists of skills needed in particular jobs.

The profile will also help you figure out what things other than skills and talents would make you happy and successful on a job. The profile can help you clarify issues such as:

- the type of job you'd prefer, such as service jobs that entail a lot of customer/client contact vs. production or materials handling jobs that may

involve less contact with the public or co-workers.

- the on-the-job environment, which include physical factors such as the size of the physical space you'd work in (such as a small store or large warehouse), whether it's noisy or quiet, or primarily indoors or outdoors, or whether the job requires a lot of sitting or a lot of moving around.
- your boss and co-workers, including your preferences for working as part of a team vs. more independently.
- your work schedule: full time, part time, weekdays vs. weekends, day vs. night shifts, etc.
- commute. Factoring in how you would get to a job (walk, drive, public transportation, transportation service), how long that commute takes, and how much it costs is important in considering a job's suitability for you.

The profile should be a work-in-progress; consider reviewing it every year as you get more academic, volunteer or paid work experience. Discuss it with your family, transition coordinator, or former supervisor(s); others often see talents, skills, and possibilities that you may not have thought of. Eventually you will share it with your DARS counselor and employment specialist who can use it to find a job or career that's suited to you.

How Parents May Help

- ✓ Help your child sort out his or her work preferences, skills and interests
- ✓ Complete the Positive Personal Profile with your child
- ✓ Identify people--relatives, friends, co-workers-- who could help find a work experience related to your child's interests
- ✓ Discuss accommodations and supports that work at home and might be useful in the workplace

Step 3. Meeting with Your Transition Coordinator/Representative

The transition coordinator at your high school is the best first stop for information on post-secondary options, including vocational programs, transition programs, college, DARS, and employment service organizations. Localities vary in the services they offer to transitioning students. Ask if your school system offers any of the following: functional life skills programs, job coaching services, school-based career assessments or even individualized career assessments.

Starting in 9th grade, IEPs should begin to include transition objectives to be achieved while the student is still in school. Objectives can be set to help a student with life skills important to employment (such as time management, using a phone or travel training) with specific job skills (such as keyboarding or food safety rules) or social/advocacy skills (greeting a supervisor, asking for help, or using a communications device.)

In addition, IDEA regulations require IEP teams to develop appropriate measurable postsecondary goals for students of transition age. These goals need to be in the areas of training, education and employment; independent living skills may also be included, if needed.

Goals should be measurable (data could be collected to monitor progress and might include number of prompts needed and number of trials) and include a deadline.

How Parents May Help

- ✓ Help your child draft a resume. Share the resume with transition staff at school and DARS counselor and get ideas on how to make the most of your child's work-related experiences.
- ✓ Attend IEP meetings, share the Positive Personal Profile, and contribute your ideas for IEPs and other plans or goals related to your student's employment.
- ✓ Discuss with the transition team any accommodations and supports that you and your student have agreed might be needed.
- ✓ Advocate when needed, but let your child speak for him or herself as much as possible.

Examples of Transition Objectives

- Work with a school counselor to fill out a career interest inventory by October 31
- Greet supervisor every day using appropriate eye contact, 4/5 trials, by February 15
- Learn to use smartphone, including calling and texting and entering needed phone numbers into contacts with no more than one prompt in 4/5 trials by June 1
- Increase typing speed to 40 wpm, with no more than 2 errors, by March 31
- Ask questions of others regarding topics initiated by self or others, to sustain conversations of at least 3 turn takings in length, 4/5 trials, by June 30
- Enroll in one technical education class per semester in chosen field of interest
- Attend two transition or employment fairs by November 30
- Draft a resume using the sample provided by the school counselor by October 15
- Fill out a mock job application, with no more than 2 prompts, 3/5 trials by December 10
- Before bedtime, check that work uniform is clean and presentable for the next day with no prompts, 4/5 trials through June 1
- Observe at least 5 jobs in the community and keep a log of jobs observed, stating specific job duties and needed skills by April 1

Examples of Post-Secondary Goals

Post-Secondary Education/Vocational Ed

- Complete coursework to become a licensed home health care aide/nurse's assistant
- Complete a sign language class, with supports, at a community college

- Complete the requirements for an Associate's Degree in Automotive Technology
- Earn an associate's degree at the community college prior to transferring to a university to work to earn the bachelor's degree

Post-Secondary Training Goals

- Complete study skills course at the community college following high school graduation
- Participate in checking account management training provided by the bank
- Complete route training to use public transit to/from work independently
- Complete training to use emerging communication technologies that replace those being used in high school

Post-Secondary Employment Goals

- Work part-time as a home health care assistant
- Be employed as a ticket scanner at the local sports arena
- Work part time in a retail store

Post-Secondary Life Skills Goals (if needed)

- Acquire and take medication according to schedule
- Utilize self determination skills in the community.
- Use a digital scheduler to be on time for volunteer work
- Vote in local, state, and national elections

Examples taken from "Development of Postsecondary Goals," Virginia Dept. of Education Guidance Document, 2011. For more information on what is required by IDEA and how to develop these goals, see

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/transition_svcs/guidance_postsecondary_goals.doc

POSITIVE PERSONAL PROFILE

Name: _____

Dreams and Goals	Talents
Skills and Knowledge	Learning Styles
Interests	Positive personality traits
Temperament	Values
Work Experiences	Support System
Specific Challenges	Solutions and Accommodations

Work Experience ideas and possibilities to explore:

Source: Richard G. Luecking. *The Way to Work: How to Facilitate Work Experiences for Youth in Transition*. (Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co., 2009), pg. 55

WORKING WITH SCHOOL TRANSITION SERVICES

All three localities offer transition and employment services to students aging out of the school system and into the adult world. Ask the transition coordinator in your student's high school about how the transition process works and for recommendations to both school-based and public vocational programs.

City of Alexandria

Transition Coordinators

Based out of T.C. Williams High School, 3330 King Street, Alexandria

Ameeta Shah, Employment Specialist,
Project SEARCH (703) 504-3687
ameeta.shah@acps.k12.va.us

Jim Cooney, Employment Support Specialist
703-824-6800 ext.6892
James.cooney@acps.k12.va.us

Angela Brown, Employment Support Specialist
(703) 824-6800, ext. 6254
angela.brown@acps.k12.va.us

For more information on transition services available in Alexandria City Public Schools, visit <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/curriculum/special-education/transition/>

Arlington County

Transition Coordinators

Joyce C. Kelly, Wakefield H.S. (703) 228-6728
joyce.kelly@apsva.us

Karen Sherman, Yorktown H.S. (703) 228-2545
karen.sherman@apsva.us

Thomas Sweet, Washington-Lee H.S. (703) 228-6265
thomas.sweet@apsva.us

Brian Stapleton, Arlington Community, Langston, Career Center and H-B Woodlawn (703) 228-6063
brian.stapleton@apsva.us

Bob Smith, Stratford (703) 228-6445
robertsmith@apsva.us

Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP)

is a transition program, located at the Arlington Career Center. PEP opportunities are based on current business trends and needs so that students may gain relevant skills for obtaining employment in today's market, including the requisite social skills necessary to secure and maintain long-term, meaningful employment. The program is designed for students to receive internship/apprenticeship experiences and may lead to trade certifications, licenses, college credit, networking connections, and/or employment directly upon graduation. PEP aims to increase students' work readiness skills to enhance the possibility of their obtaining and maintaining work as an adult.

Depending on student's needs, job experiences may range from a fully supported on-campus program to a fully independent work experience at a local business. Certain students will participate in Career Technical Education (CTE) courses as an adjunct to their job site experiences. PEP teachers and administrators coordinate with DARS and Arlington County IDDS case managers to support a smooth transition into adulthood.

Arlington students aged 18-21 with IEPs may be eligible for PEP. Contact your high school transition coordinator for more information or email Micah Stein-Verbit 703-228-5801 micah.stein@apsva.us

For more information on transition services available in Arlington Public Schools, visit <http://www.apsva.us/transition-services/>

Fairfax County

Transition Coordinators

Career & Transition Services, 571-423-4150
Ann Long, Coordinator

Fairfax has Employment and Transition Representatives (ETRs) at each of its 29 high schools and centers. For more information on these services, visit <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/career-and-transition-services>

ETRs facilitate students' transition to post-secondary life by providing transition and employment services while the student is still in school. Employment services include job-seeking skills, job development and job placement, job maintenance and work-based learning. Transition services include information sharing about postsecondary options and resources, referrals to school-based services, support to students in their final year of school, and referrals to adult service agencies upon graduation.

Career and Transition Services also provides a number of services and instructional programs to enhance career and college readiness. These include Career Assessment, Work Awareness & Transition (WAT) class, Education for Employment (EFE) class, and Academy Support.

For students choosing to continue their education up to age 22, Career and Transition Services offers a number of programs focused on employability and life skills including the Davis and Pulley Career Centers and the Secondary Transition to Employment Programs (STEP) based at Chantilly, South Lakes and Mount Vernon High Schools.

Exploring Resources

High school transition coordinators can also give you more information on the following adult service events held throughout the year.

Provider Resource Fairs—Fairfax County Public Schools and the Arlington PEP Program both hold the annual Resource Fairs in the Fall for students seeking adult services resources.

Flash Forward – Post-secondary Education & Employment Options. Held annually in April and hosted by Fairfax County Public Schools. The event includes a vendor fair and workshops.

Future Quest (George Mason Univ.) College and career event for middle and high school students held every other year; the next one is November 2017.

Parent Resource Centers:

Alexandria City PRC

Special Education Family Resource Center
TC Williams HS, 3801 West Braddock Rd, Alexandria,

VA (703)824-0129

<http://www.acps.k12.va.us/curriculum/special-education/prc/>

Arlington Public Schools PRC

<https://www.apsva.us/student-services-special-education/special-education-office-of/parent-resource-center/>

2110 Washington Boulevard, Suite 158,
Arlington, VA 22204 (703) 228-7239

Fairfax County Public Schools PRC

<https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center>

Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services
2334 Gallows Road, Rm 105, Dunn Loring, VA 22027
(703)204-3941 prc@fcps.edu

Internship Programs

John Hudson Internship Program

This is a summer internship program in Fairfax County Government for college students and recent graduates with disabilities
(703) 324-5421 or
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/disabilities/internprogram.htm>

Educating Youth through Employment (EYE)

This is an employer-driven summer employment initiative to help young adults 18-21 gain the experience, confidence, and skills needed to be successful in the workforce.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/ss/eye-program.htm>

Transition Programs

MOST Program

Meaningful Opportunities for Successful Transitions (MOST) is a one year individualized program of activities and training designed to facilitate successful transition into the adult community. The program focuses on facilitating outcomes for participants in three domains:

- Self-sufficiency — including self-help, independent living and safety skills.

- Community — including social skills, transportation and recreation.
- Vocation — including employment, education, vocational training and day habilitation.

MOST accepts CSB and Waiver funding. For more information, <http://www.jfgh.org/services/services/>
 Contact Marcie Bennett, MOST Program Administrator, 240-283-6031 MBennett@JFGH.org

SPARC's Pawsome Learning Labs (PLL)

PLL is an adapted experiential program with skill building curriculums modified for a variety of learning styles and levels. This program training includes personal support attendants working side by side to develop strong communication and facilitation skills in work settings with their clients. The program provides 2 years of training. The 1st year focuses on soft skills components and the 2nd year focuses on hard skills. Offered Tues/Wed/Thurs from 10am-1pm. Cost is \$400 per month. For more information, contact Jodie Wyckoff, Jodie@sparcsolutions.org (703)967-5997 www.sparcsolutions.org

Exploring Post-Secondary Resources

George Mason University LIFE Program

is a post-secondary program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who desire a university experience in a supportive academic environment.

<https://masonlife.gmu.edu/>

Program Director: Heidi J. Graff, Ph.D.

(703)993-3905

Northern Virginia Community College

Director of Disability Services

Estela Landeros Dugourd, PhD

www.nvcc.edu/disability-services/
eldugourd@nvcc.edu

(703) 764-5032

College Living Experience

Provides post-secondary supports to young adults with varying disabilities.

www.experiencecle.com

Montgomery College, 401 North Washington Street,
 Suite 420 Rockville, MD 20850

Strive Program at NVCC Annandale

provides opportunities for young adults with learning disabilities to transition from school to post-secondary training, employment and successful community living

<http://www.striveinclud.org>

Dr. Jean E. Robinson 301-292-7600

College Steps at NVCC Loudoun

Provides individualized college support for students with social, communication, and learning challenges.

<http://www.collegesteps.org/college-steps-virginia>

1-888-732-1022 contactus@collegesteps.org

To find out more about post-secondary options visit the Heath Center, an online clearinghouse on post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities, at www.heath.gwu.edu

For other post-secondary options, see

www.thinkcollege.net;

<http://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/disabled->

PREPARING FOR A JOB: The Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) is part of the Virginia Department for Aging & Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

DARS provides short term support services to help individuals with disabilities prepare for the workplace, find a job, and get needed support once on the job. DARS focuses on community based competitive employment (offering at least minimum wage).

DARS recommends that students explore Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services three years before they plan to graduate high school. This early involvement helps students get to know their VR Counselor and helps the counselor work with the student to outline activities that lead to achievement of the employment goal.

DARS Services include: Assistive Technology, Career Exploration, Career Guidance and Counseling, Job Development, Job Placement, Job Shadowing, On-the-Job Training, Postsecondary Training and Education, PERT, Supported Employment, and Vocational Evaluation and Assessment. For more information on DARS services and to download their guide, visit <http://www.vadars.org/transitionservices.htm>

The Role of Your Counselor

Your Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor is an expert in disability and career counseling. There is a counselor assigned to every high school in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Falls Church. He or she will determine your eligibility for DARS services, help identify any barriers to competitive employment, and work on your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with you.

You (or your parent) may have to sign a release so that your counselor may speak with, or get documents from, your doctors, therapists, former employers (if any), and school staff.

Becoming a DARS Client

To participate, you will go through the following steps: referral, intake, eligibility determination, needs assessment, and plan development and implementation.

Referral

Students with disabilities (those who have IEPs or a 504 Plan) are encouraged to apply for DARS vocational services. Ask your transition specialist to refer you or you may call DRS at 800-552-5019 (voice) or 800-464-9950 (TTY)

Intake

If you are still in school, your transition coordinator can set up an initial meeting for you with a DARS counselor, or you may call the local office yourself. The purpose of this first meeting is to talk about your job plans, disability, education, and any work history, as well as how DRS may be able to assist you.

At this meeting, your counselor may ask for additional information or testing (at no cost to you), such as a psychological evaluation or a rehabilitation technology assessment. You will be asked to sign a release so DARS can request your records.

Eligibility

You may be eligible for DARS if you have a goal of competitive employment in an integrated job setting and meet the criteria for eligibility. Eligible individuals have a physical, mental, emotional, sensory or learning disability that interferes with their ability to work.

Financial eligibility is based on family income. DARS uses a sliding scale which is subject to the number of dependents claimed on the latest income tax return. However, when students receive Social Security Disability (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for their disability, they are presumed eligible for DARS services, if they intend to become employed.

Information from you, your records, and any new reports will be used to learn about your disability, how it affects your work capabilities and limits, and whether DARS services can help you become employed. Even if you have a disability, you and your counselor must decide if you meet all the eligibility criteria.

Eligibility review is completed within 60 days of the initial meeting. You can help by getting your records for your counselor or authorizing your counselor to request them and keeping appointments.

Evaluating Needs

If you meet the eligibility criteria, you and your counselor will discuss your vocational goal and work together to choose **the type of job** that's right for you.

If you need more information, your counselor may suggest a vocational evaluation (at no cost to you). A vocational evaluation can include counseling, testing, work samples, and on-the-job evaluations. The results help you both learn about the types of jobs you can do and are most interested in doing.

Next, you and your counselor will jointly decide **what services** you need to get ready for and find that type of job. Services provided without cost include:

- Career Exploration
- Career Guidance and Counseling
- Disability Awareness Counseling
- Follow-up Services after job placement
- Job seeking and placement (no required job coach)
- Vocational Assessment
- On-the-Job Training program
- Unpaid Work Experiences

Services that may have a cost share include:

- College
- Training programs
- Durable medical equipment or other goods
- Assistive technology
- Therapies or other medical services
- Supported employment (working with a job coach)
 - Job seeking
 - Job placement follow along services

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) After DARS eligibility is established, you and your family work with the VR counselor an/or a potential service provider to write an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE:

- Focuses on the goal of employment
- Outlines steps needed for employment goal
- Plans for necessary services and funding

In thinking about necessary services, you, your parents, and the VR counselor take into consideration anything that may affect your ability to prepare,

qualify, or apply for a job or stay on a job. These issues include: mobility, self-direction, self-care, interpersonal skills, communication skills, work skills, organizational skills, self-advocacy skills, stamina, money management, and medication management.

By signing the IPE, you are promising to take the steps in your plan to become employed. You also show that you made the IPE planning decisions jointly with your counselor, parents or guardians. Ask questions to be sure you understand your role, rights, and responsibilities under the IPE. IPEs are reviewed at least once a year.

You must tell your counselor about any changes that affect your vocational rehabilitation (address or telephone number, financial situation or family size, medical insurance, your disability or general health, or government benefits).

DARS Resources

Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) located in Fishersville, VAWWRC provides people with disabilities comprehensive and individualized services that lead to employment and improved independence. WWRC provides vocational evaluation and training, medical rehabilitation, life skills evaluation and training, assistive technology, and other services. To learn more about WWRC, visit <http://wwrc.virginia.gov>

Post-Secondary Education Rehabilitation and Transition Program (PERT)

The PERT program is a school to work initiative at the WWRC that provides high school students with disabilities with a 5-10 day comprehensive assessment of vocational, and independent living, social and recreational skills. Eligible students must be age 16 and older, with a full scale IQ of 60 or evidence of good adaptive skills; the student must be returning to school the fall after the PERT session (in other words, you cannot be in your last year of school).

PERT offers the following:

- Life Skills Training Program
- Vocational Evaluations
- Therapeutic Evaluations
- Vocational Training Programs

To apply for PERT, contact the transition coordinator in your high school. You would need to have an open case with DARS to be considered. For more information, go to:

<http://wwrc.virginia.gov/PERT.htm>

Life Skills Transition Program

The Life Skills Transition Program (LSTP) is a nine week introductory program divided into three week modules at the WWRC. Clients participate in classes designed to provide a foundation of soft skills as part of their transition to employment and independence. independently. On and off-campus activities provide an introduction to issues ranging from money management, grocery shopping and cooking, to personal health care, disability awareness, self-advocacy, and job-seeking skills. For more information, go to <http://wwrc.net/LSTP.htm>

Additionally, clients have an opportunity to earn the [Career Readiness Certificate](#) (CRC) while in the Life Skills Transition Program. Virginia's CRC is an assessment-based credential that gives employers, career seekers, and workforce professionals information and access to a uniform measure of key workplace skills demonstrated by a client.

To apply, contact your DARS counselor. If the team is in agreement, you complete an application with your counselor; the application then goes to the WWRC admissions committee, which makes the final decision.

DARS Limitations

DARS does not guarantee a job at any time. You must continue to conduct your own job search. It also cannot promise to send you to school or other type of training.

If and when DARS funding is limited, the law requires DARS to prioritize its services (called Order of Selection) to those with the most severe disabilities and functional limitations (defined by DARS as a vocational barrier or impediment due to a disability that affects mobility, self-direction, self-care, interpersonal skills, work skills, communication or work tolerance).

Regional DARS Office Locations

Alexandria DRS Offices

Serves Arlington and Alexandria Public Schools
5904 Old Richmond Highway Suite 410
Alexandria, VA 22303
Karen.Baugh@dars.virginia.gov
(703) 960-3411

Fairfax/Falls Church DRS Office

T. Marshall Smith
11150 Fairfax Blvd. Suite 300
Fairfax, VA 22030
Marshall.Smith@dars.virginia.gov
(703) 359-1124

Manassas DRS Office

Mark Fletcher
9309 Center Street, Suite 304, Manassas, VA 20110
Mark.fletcher@dars.virginia.gov (703)335-5550

DRS Transition Sharepoint Site

<https://sp.wwrc.net/tes/SitePages/Home.aspx> A public site offering access to outreach and reference materials, DRS presentations, local cooperative agreements and more. Items of interest will be posted frequently and you're invited to suggest or share helpful tools and resources for posting.

WORKING WITH AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICE ORGANIZATION

DARS contracts with outside vendors called Employment Service Organizations (ESO) to provide many of the short-term employment services to eligible clients. For example, you may meet with a VR Counselor to determine that you are eligible for situational assessments, but then the VR Counselor from DARS will contract with an employment specialist from an ESO to actually take you to participate in a situational assessment. These vendors may be private nonprofit or for-profit organizations. A list of these providers begins on page 20.

The Role of the Employment Specialist

Once a DARS client, you will work closely with either a vocational counselor from DARS or an employment specialist from the employment service organization that has contracted with DARS. As a prospective employee, the employment specialist helps you: prepare for, get and stay on a job

communicate with your family about your progress
complete necessary applications & resumes
assist you with initial training as needed
identify transportation resources as well as travel training.

Employment specialists also work with individual employers to ensure there's a match between the job requirements and your skills, including:
works with the employer to find out about available jobs
works closely with hiring manager to determine the scope of work.
analyzes the work environment to identify the essential tasks and cultural aspects of the department.
Assist the human resources department with scheduling and planning the interview.
Identify accommodations and/or adaptations you may need
communicate with the employer to evaluate your progress;
provide disability awareness training for co-workers as needed.

The specialist also coordinates with your DARS counselor on job strategies, concerns of the employer and co-workers, and development of natural supports in the workplace.

Job Development Process

There are four phases to the job development process:

Situational Assessments (about 1 month)

Situational assessments (going to a job site and "practicing" the tasks) allow the job coach to see how an individual might perform in a particular type of job. Information gathered during the assessment helps determine interest, skill level, preferred environment, and other issues before the job search begins. Not everyone wants or needs a situational assessment.

Job Development (2-6 months)

This phase comprises the actual job search and preparation for job interviews: networking, looking for job openings, writing or updating the resume, developing a cover letter, practice filling out employment applications and interviewing.

Placement and Training

When an appropriate job is found, the vendor can go on the interview, and help determine any needed accommodation. Once on the job, your specialist becomes a job coach to help train you for the job and communicate with you, the employer and your family on how strategies to ensure you are successful.

Job coaching with competitive employment has a limited time frame; you go through an initial phase of working together very closely until you feel comfortable being independent. The amount of intervention on the job depends on the need of the consumer. The job coach begins to fade as the client is able to perform without assistance and things are going well on the job.

Once the client is stable on the job with less than 20% intervention from the job coach, the team will discuss next steps. Travel training may be part of the contract with the vendor. Coaching may also include referrals to outside community resources needed for success in the placement.

How Parents May Help

- ✓ Reinforce workplace expectations with your son or daughter, such as grooming, appropriate dress, and punctuality
- ✓ Provide feedback to counselors about the work experience from what you are seeing and hearing at home from your child
- ✓ Ask for feedback about how your child is doing on the job from the employment specialist's and the employer's point of view
- ✓ Offer to help solve challenges on issues such as transportation and special accommodations

Closing Your Case In general, after you have been working with DARS at least 90 days, you and your counselor will close your DARS case. Before closing your case, your counselor will stay in touch to make sure the job is right for you and that you and your employer are satisfied.

DARS may also close your case if you are no longer

eligible, if services will not result in your employment, or you have not met your responsibilities.

If you think you need additional DARS services after your case is closed, you may ask your counselor to re-open your case. You may also contact the ESO that provided worked with DARS to provide your services.

Choosing an Employment Services Organization

Once DARS funding ends, money for continuing, long-term support may be funded by a Medicaid Waiver, the local Community Services Board (CSB), or privately paid by the family. The CSB is the first point of entry into the publicly funded system of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For more information on how to apply for services from the CSB and the Medicaid Waiver in your locality, see page 41.

You may want to interview a number of providers (list begins on page 20) and then select the one who you think will be most successful for you. Begin by visiting their websites and then schedule a tour.

Reminders

- The following questions are a general guideline to assist you as you meet with and tour employment service organizations. As you prepare, you will begin to think of questions that are more specifically related to the particular needs of your son or daughter. Don't hesitate to ask any question!
- Prior to the meeting with the ESO, it is suggested that you have a firm understanding of what funding sources you are affiliated with (Community Service Boards, Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Medicaid Waiver, Self-Directed Services). Learn about what support options are available to you.
- As you begin to interview ESOs, the process will raise additional questions that you may have never thought of. This is okay! If you feel the need to do second interviews to complete a more specific comparison of services, take the extra-time to re-interview.
- Share your capabilities, skills, needs and goals.
- Consider the following when making your

decision: How did the provider answer your questions? Did they treat you with respect? Do you like the staff members? Did they present themselves in a professional manner?

Examples of Questions to Ask Employment Service Organizations (ESOs)

- How does your organization develop job leads for people?
- What companies have you placed people at and in what types of jobs?
- What type of feedback on job development and training do you provide for the family?
- Will the job developer also provide the on the job training or will another individual be hired to do so (i.e. job coach, natural supports set up, co-worker, trainer, etc.)?
- Describe some of the factors you consider when matching an employment site and the individual.
- What is your marketing approach with a new, prospective employer?
- How many people does your organization service in supported employment?
- What kind of activities will you do with the individual to better acquaint yourself with them?
- Do you provide travel training to and from the job site?
- What costs are involved and who pays? What sources of funding do you accept?
- What will our communication look like?
- What other support services or training does your organization provide? Social skills, independent living skills, communications skills training? Volunteer experiences? Community Integration Services?
- What do you do if I need additional help after I have found a job?

Employment First is a national movement rooted in the premise that all people, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of competitive, community-based employment. Employment First is a framework for systems change efforts. The initiative calls for raising expectations, implementing better practices, and aligning policies and reimbursement structures to promote

competitive, integrated employment opportunities for all.

In February 2012, Virginia Senate Joint Resolution No. 127 was passed, establishing a formal Employment First policy in the Commonwealth. Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred option for Virginians with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly financed systems.

Models of Employment & Funding Sources

At present, employment and day services for individuals with disabilities fall into the varying models described below. The table on page 20 shows types of service models used and sources of funding for different employment service organizations. However, under the Employment First legislation, the first option should always be placement of individuals with disabilities in community *competitive* employment, making *minimum wage or higher*, in an integrated setting.

DARS is the first payer for short term services needed to place individuals in Individual Supported Employment, Group Supported Employment or Pre-Vocational Services. Once an individual is able to obtain and maintain a job for 90 days, DARS funding phases out and if available, Waiver or CSB (Community Services Board) funding phases in. Additional information can be found on p. 40. If DARS cannot serve an individual (he/she may not be found eligible by DARS or there is a waiting list, Waiver can provide all the funding from the beginning.

The CSB is the initial point of entry for public funding in your locality for support for individuals with developmental disabilities. Services include support coordination, individual and group supported employment, and day support. Services are contingent on funding availability and eligibility criteria.

Supported employment falls into two models:

Individual Supported Employment is defined as intermittent support, usually provided one-on-one by a job coach to an individual in a supported position

who, during most of the time on the job site, performs, independently.

Group Supported Employment is defined as continuous support provided by staff to eight or fewer individuals with disabilities in a contract position with a local company or for a mobile work crew that does jobs in a variety of places around the community.

** Several employment service organizations in the Northern Virginia area have Ability One contracts. For more information, visit www.abilityone.gov. The nation's largest single provider of jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities, the Ability One Program uses the purchasing power of the federal government to buy products and services from participating, community-based nonprofit agencies.

Day Support Services include Non-Work Community Based Centers

These services include all services that are located in the community rather than a facility and do not involve paid employment. These activities focus on supporting people with disabilities to access community activities where most people involved do not have disabilities. These activities include general community integration activities such as recreation and leisure, improving social skills, activities of daily living practiced in the community and volunteer experience. This option typically serves individuals who have a high level of daily living support needs throughout the day and who need more support to develop vocational skills.

If the person does not want to work, Day Services can be pursued through the waiver or the CSB without needing to go through DARS first. DARS will not fund Day Support because it is not related to employment.

EMPLOYMENT & DAY SUPPORT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Vendor	Websites	Services Provided	Funding Sources
The Arc Greater Prince William/INSIGHT 13505 Hillendale Drive Woodbridge, VA 22193 (703) 670-4800	www.arcgpw.org	Supported Employment Day Support Services	Waiver CSB DARS
Best Buddies Virginia 131 East Broad Street, Suite 205 Falls Church, VA 22046	www.bestbuddiesvirginia.org	Individual Supported Employment	DARS
Chimes, Inc. 3951 Pender Drive, #120 Fairfax, VA 22030 (703) 267-6558	www.chimes.org	Day Support Services	Waiver CSB DARS Private Pay
The Choice Group 4807 Radford Ave. #106 Richmond, VA 23230 (804)278-9151 <i>** Although headquartered in Richmond, employment specialists are located throughout Northern VA</i>	www.thechoicegroup.com	Individual Supported Employment	Waiver DARS Private Pay
CommunityVisions, LLC 3460 Commission Court, Suite 101 Woodbridge, VA 22192 Charming Concepts Workhouse Arts Center 9601 Ox Road Lorton, VA 22079	www.comvslc.net	Pre-Vocational Services Day Support Services	Waiver CSB DARS Private Pay
Cooperative Employment Program (CEP) 11150 Fairfax Blvd., Suite 300 Fairfax, VA 22030-5066 (703) 359-1124	www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/services/cep.htm	Supported Employment	CSB DARS Private Pay

EMPLOYMENT & DAY SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Vendor	Websites	Services Provided	Funding Sources
Didlake, Inc. 8641 Breeden Ave. Manassas, VA 20110 (703) 361-4195	www.didlake.org	Supported Employment Day Support Services	Waiver CSB DARS Private pay
Every Citizen Has Opportunities (ECHO) 71 Lawson Road, SE Leesburg, VA 20177 (703) 779-2100	www.echoworks.org	Supported Employment Day Support Services	Waiver CSB DRS private pay
Job Discovery, Inc. 10345 Democracy Lane Fairfax, VA 22030 (703) 385-0041	www.jobdiscovery.org	Supported Employment Day Support Services	Waiver CSB private pay
Linden Resources, Inc. 750 South 23rd Street Arlington, VA 22202 (703) 521-4441	www.linden.org	Career Readiness Transition Program Supported Employment Day Support Services	Waiver CSB DRS private pay
MVLE, Inc. 7420 Fullerton Road Suite 110 Springfield, VA 22153 (703) 569-3900	www.mvle.org	Supported Employment Day Support Services	Waiver CSB DRS
ServiceSource, Inc. 10467 White Granite Drive Oakton, VA 22124 (703)461-6000	www.servicesource.org	Supported Employment Day Support Services Assistive Technology Screening Career Center	Waiver CSB DRS private pay
Saint Coletta of Greater Washington 207 S. Peyton Street Alexandria, VA 22314 571-438-6940	www.stcoletta.org	Supported Employment Day Support Services Life Skills Training	Waiver CSB DRS private pay
St. John's Community Services, Inc. 7611 Little River Turnpike #404, Annandale, VA 22003 (703) 914-2755	www.sjcs.org	Supported Employment Day Support Services	Waiver CSB DRS private pay

Alternatives to Traditional Employment & Day Services

Self Directed Services in Fairfax County

Self-Directed (SD) Services is an alternative to the traditional model of support for people with intellectual disabilities. The individual/family is ultimately responsible to determine service needs (with input from the individual's Community Services Board support coordinator and Interdisciplinary Team), identify a service schedule, and recruit, hire, train, supervise, compensate, and evaluate direct service providers. SD Services:

- Increase and expand individualized service options and plans
- Bring greater control and supervision of services to the individual/family
- Allow greater flexibility in scheduling and receiving services, and
- Can be provided in the community closer to the individual's home

SD Services are available to individuals with intellectual disabilities who meet CSB service eligibility requirements and currently receive or will be authorized to receive day support or employment services funding. For more information, contact Joel Friedman at (703)324-4433 or joel.friedman@fairfaxcounty.gov.

SPARC (Specially Adapted Resource Clubs)

Is a clubhouse model day program that supports adults with disabilities over the age of 22 with life skills development, entrepreneurial projects and enrichment activities such as music and art therapies. Clubs are located in Reston, McLean and Fairfax. Fees are \$400 per month for 3+ days a week, \$340 per month for 2 days per week, and \$260 per month for 1 day a week. For more information, visit www.sparcsolutions.org or call (703)338-6185.

Adults with Disabilities Day Program (ADDP)

Is facilitated by McLean Bible Church for high school graduates and focuses on spiritual formation, literacy, vocational training, personal care and independence, recreation and leisure, social skills, travel training and community navigation, and self-advocacy. There is a monthly fee based on the number of days enrolled per

week. For more information, <https://www.mcleanbible.org/connect/adults-disabilities-day-program-addp>

Employment & Transition Support Service Providers

Next Level Transition Consulting

Provides support for transition services, career exploration, career planning and job coaching, and drop-in independent living support. Accepts private pay and DARS funding.

www.nextleveltransition.com Contact: Scott Wilbur, Transition Director (571)332-2992
scottwilbur@nextleveltransition.com

Starfish Savers

Services provided include consultation and advocacy, coaching and life skills, and community based transition coaching. Accepts private pay and DARS funding.

www.starfishsavers.com

Contact: Larrie Ellen Randall (703) 631-9551

Larrie.Ellen@starfishsavers.com

Creative Models of Employment Support

Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates

Started in 2013, Every1 Can Work is a non-profit organization that employs people with disabilities at their business enterprise, Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates. Employees learn kitchen and life skills working with coaches.

www.every1canwork.com

9639 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax, VA (703)278-2627

Wildflour Bakery Chef-In-Training Program

Started August 2016, in partnership with the Fairfax-Falls Church CSB Employment and Day Services provides cooking skills and food safety training over a 26 month period. For more information, contact Alberto Sangiorgio at Wilflour Catering (703)263-1951.

Arlington Weaves

ArlingtonWeaves, Etc. provides support to adults with developmental disabilities by teaching them technical and social skills and by helping to improve their self-sufficiency. The program is operated by ServiceSource, on a contract basis with the Arlington County Department of Human Services. For more information, contact Arlington DD Services at 703-228-1700.

GETTING A JOB: Writing a Resume and Searching, Applying and Interviewing for a Job

This section covers what has to be done to find a job and prepare to be hired: resume writing, searching for a job, applying, and interviewing for a position.

1. Writing a Good Resume

The resume is a one-page document that summarizes your work experiences. The key to creating a resume is one that is general enough to include all your information and experience but still specific to the company or industry you are interested in. See the next pages for examples of resumes.

In general, your resume should be neatly typewritten in 11 or 12-point type (black ink only), with no typos or misspelled words, on clean white paper. Use a font that is easy to read, like Times Roman or Helvetica: no script, all-capital letter, extra-tall, or cartoonish typefaces that are not professional. Use boldface or italics sparingly, if at all.

Select the Best Format

Different resume styles highlight different types of experience. Before you start writing, think about what format might be best suited to highlight your qualifications.

There are two basic resume formats: **chronological** and **functional**. The main difference between them is the amount of emphasis you give your **job history** compared to the amount you give your **skills**.

- A **chronological format** highlights your employment history. This format can work if you have a solid work history in a particular job or field and you're planning on looking for a similar

position.

- A **functional format** highlights your **skills**. Use this format to show what you're capable of doing, even if it's not directly related to your work history. It's the best choice if you're changing careers.

The best resumes are usually a **combination** of these formats. They communicate your strongest qualifications while providing employers with relevant information on your employment history.

Personal Information

The resume should include your full name, your address and the **best** contact information (cell phone or email or home phone); for example, if no one answers the home phone, then list a cellular phone or an email address as the best way to get in touch with you.

Job Objective

This is optional.

Summation of Skills

This should be a bulleted list of what you are best at (not the jobs you've had) in two areas: hard/technical skills and soft (interpersonal skills). Hard skills could include office skills such as typing or knowledge of computer software like Microsoft Word or Excel, or a technical skill like first aid, carpentry or veterinary care. Examples of soft skills are ability to work as part of a team, time management, and communication skills.

Work Experience

List your work experience (which can include volunteer or community service activities as well as jobs for pay) in the order you had them. You may include a brief description of your duties or responsibilities.

Accomplishments

Talk to your employment counselor, parents, or even teachers about your work experience to get some ideas of how to show that you made progress on a job. Listing *how* you did, not just *what* you did, also shows other skills such as an ability to learn a task quickly, cooperate with others, meet a timetable, and be flexible.

For example, you might say you “increased rate of collation of packets from 14 per hour to 30 per hour within first 90 days,” or “collaborated with the leadership team to create a new filing system and implement within 6 week internship period.”

References

References--people who will say good things about you--do not need to be included on the resume, but you need to have them available to give to the interviewer. Be sure you have at least two references, at least one professional (current or former employer) and personal (such as a teacher, faith leader, Scout master, coach, camp counselor, staff at a community group you’ve worked with).

2. Searching for a Job

Most job seekers find their jobs through a personal contact, and this approach works well for youth with disabilities who may benefit from a personal connection or the willingness of a friend or a relative to help with the job search. Asking people to help you with the job search is called “networking.”

Getting Started with Your Network

Using the information from the Positive Personal Profile and any other assessments you’ve done, determine the kind of job and type of environment in which you would be most likely to succeed.

Make a list of anyone who might who might be hiring for the type of job you are looking for.

The list could include friends, relatives, neighbors, your parents’ work colleagues, coaches and teachers, local store owners with whom you have a connection, members of your house of worship, or members of clubs or associations to which you belong. Ask for an introduction to anyone you don’t know well so you can talk to them about any potential jobs.

Introducing Yourself

Not everyone is good at talking or talking about themselves. One idea would be to develop a short (20- to 30-second) “speech” about yourself with help from your parents, transition coordinator or employment specialist about what you want to do for a job and what qualities you might bring to the workplace.

Be sure to be specific: “I am good at ‘X’ (data entry,

packing boxes, filing, scanning documents, etc.).” Give your contacts a quick glimpse of your best work-related self: “I am a hard worker who will follow the rules,” “I like being on time,” “I like to get a job done,” “I’m known for my positive attitude.” If possible, memorize this and role play with parents or counselor to see how it sounds to others.

Resources for Networking

In the age of the Internet and social media, you have many ways of learning about jobs and of telling others that you are “in the market” for a job.

For information on networking, see the U.S.

Department of Labor’s website at

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/Networking.pdf>

Popular sites that can help you with your job search by expanding your social reach include LinkedIn, Facebook, Google+ and Twitter.

However, it is important to remember that social media do have risks, including accidentally sharing personal information (such as medical or disability-related information) that you don’t want employers or others to know. In general,

- Be aware that nothing is private if it’s on line. And once on line, it’s there forever in most cases.
- Check your profile regularly to see what comments have been posted. If you find information you feel could be detrimental to your candidacy or career, see about getting it removed – and in the meantime make sure you have an answer ready to counter or explain “digital dirt.”

See CareerBuilder.com for helpful tips to protect your online image and your job opportunities in their online article, “Warning: Helpful Social Networking Resources: “A Word About Social Networking.”

SAMPLE RESUME

FIRST NAME, LAST NAME
123 My Main Address, City, State Zip Code
P: (703) 555-5555 E: FirstLastName@gmail.com

SUMMATION OF SKILLS:

Hard or Technical Skills
Soft Skill (Interpersonal or relationship skills)
Soft Skill

WORK EXPERIENCE: *(In Chronological Order)*

Job Title / Position *(Most Recent)* **Month, Year – Current OR Month, Year**
Company, City, State
Description of duty
Accomplishment
Skill learned

Job Title / Position **Month, Year - Month, Year**
Company, City, State
Description of duty
Accomplishment
Skill learned

Job Title / Position **Month, Year –Month, Year**
Company, City, State
Description of duty
Accomplishment
Skill learned

INTERESTS & ACTIVITIES:

Athletics, appropriate hobbies, groups
Teams, leadership associations or organizations

EDUCATION:

Name of University / Educational Facility **Graduated: Year**
City, State
Focus if Study, relevant courses (Optional)

The Basic Elements

A resume consists of several sections, each of which delivers essential information. The table below explains what each section of your resume should tell your reader.

Resume section	What it tells the reader
Top portion of resume (first third to half)	If your resume is worth reading further. This opening "snapshot" should entice readers to read more.
Header (name and contact information)	Your preferred name and how to contact you. The reader shouldn't have to think about this (e.g., wonder what name you go by).
Headline and Summary	What you're looking for and why you're qualified. Announces your job target and quickly sums up why you're a good candidate. Note that experts recommend this approach to replace what used to be called "Objective" on many resumes. Read more in our FAQs .
Skills	Whether you have the required skills. Helps the reader quickly match your skills to the position requirements.
Work Experience or Professional Experience or Employment History	What you've accomplished that's relevant. Explains what you've achieved that could also benefit the reader's company.
Education	Whether you meet the education requirements. Again, helps the reader quickly match you to the position requirements.
Continuing Education or Professional Development or Additional Training	What further training you've pursued. Matches you to job requirements and also illustrates initiative and commitment to learning.
Other Information	What other assets you offer. Provides additional information (professional memberships, awards, etc.) to support your candidacy.

<http://www.careeronestop.org/ResumeGuide/TheBasicElements.aspx>

REFERENCES

PROFESSIONAL

Last, First Name (Supervisor / Volunteer Coordinator) Known for X Years
Position
Company associated during work experience
City, State
Current Phone / Email

Last, First Name (Teacher / Counselor) Known for X Years
Position
Company associated during work experience
City, State
Current Phone / Email

Last, First Name Known for X Years
Position
Company associated during work experience
City, State
Current Phone / Email

PERSONAL

Last, First Name (Non-Family Friend / Counselor) Known for X Years
Position
Company associated during work experience
City, State
Current Phone / Email

Job Search & Training Resources

Fairfax County

Skill Source Centers

These centers offer free job training and resources to job seekers. Services include job preparation workshops, career fairs, resume-writing assistance, individualized career counseling, and job-related training.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/ss/employtraining.htm

Fairfax: (703) 324-7280

Annandale: (703) 533-5400

Alexandria: (703) 704-6286

Reston: (703) 787-4974

For more information on any of these, see:

<http://www.myskillsource.org>

SkillSource is also a Ticket to Work Program helping people with disabilities who receive social security benefits find employment. Services may include comprehensive assessments, development of individual employment plans as well as career counseling, career planning, and access to job-related training opportunities.

(703) 752-1606 or MyTicket@myskillsource.org

City of Alexandria

Workforce Development Center

The City of Alexandria's Workforce Development Center (WDC) offers staffing solutions that provide businesses with employees who are skilled and ready to work. As a certified One Stop Center, WDC serves a variety of skill levels from those with advanced degrees and years of experience to those with limited education and experience. WDC provides services and resources for job seekers including access to a Career Center which includes assistive technology, career readiness workshops, career assessments and customized hiring events.

1900 N. Beauregard St., Suite 300

Alexandria, VA 22311

(703) 746-5940 Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm

<http://alexandriava.gov/WorkforceDevelopment>

Career Center for Self-Directed Job Search

- Computers, internet (Wi-Fi), printers, fax and copy machines
- Online and on-site access to daily job listings
- Hiring events, including job and career fairs
- Assistive technology such as video relay, Jaws and Zoom Text
- Career Readiness Workshops
- Career Assessment Tools
- Search the Internet for job leads

Assisted Job Search

- Meet with an employment specialist who will help you develop an individual employment plan
- Get help with your resume
- Practice interviewing skills
- Take a vocational or career assessment to learn more about your work interests and aptitudes
- Find an occupation to match your skills and abilities
- Get job leads for local employers

WDC is a service provider for the Ticket to Work Program. If you are an Alexandria resident and you receive SSI or SSDI benefits due to a disability, you may be eligible to participate in this program. Contact Maurice Tomido for more information at 571-384-5244 or Maurice.tomido@alexandria.gov. For more information; also see "How Working Affects Your Benefits" in this guide.

Job Search Resources

Another helpful way to job search is to look at companies that are already hiring people with disabilities, since they have a current practice that is working.

Diversity Inc publishes a list of the top companies for people with disabilities, including autism. It is not simply about who provides accommodations and flexible work schedules, although those are important. Information collected as part of their diversity survey shows these companies make a concerted effort to recruit, retain and promote people with disabilities and to create an inclusive corporate culture for people with both physical and hidden disabilities like ASD. For the most recent list, see <http://www.diversityinc.com/the-diversityinc-top-50-companies-for-diversity-2016/>

www.gettinghired.com post jobs by companies interested in hiring people with disabilities.

www.careeronestop.org is an online resource for job search, training, and current job trends.

Other online job search resources include:

www.CareerBuilder.com

www.Monster.com

www.SimplyHired.com

www.Craigslist.com

www.usajobs.gov

www.careers.arlingtonva.us

Career Centers

Secondary or post-secondary school career centers in your county or city

One-Stop Career Centers

Job search websites (not specifically targeted for people with disabilities):

Local online classifieds

Your local news website

Career Center at ServiceSource

offers a variety of services for job seekers, including:

- Computers for job searches and training, including career exploration skill building
- Postings of current job leads and community resources
- Phones to contact employers
- Printers/copiers to make copies of resumes

- Qualified Employment Development Specialists to answer your questions and provide assistance
- Benefits counseling for SSI and SSDI recipients
- Financial literacy counseling
- Peer Support
- Monthly Workshops

<http://www.servicesource.org/services-by-state/virginia/career-center>

10467 White Granite Drive, Oakton, VA

Contact Lauren Goldschmidt (703) 970-3672

lgoldschmidt@servicesource.org

3. Applying for a Job

The job application form is probably the first impression an employer will have of you, so make it a good one! It is important to answer all of the questions carefully and positively.

Employers will be checking to see:

How neat you are

If the application is complete

How prepared and organized you are

How well you follow directions

Before you start:

Read the instructions carefully. FOLLOW them!

Use blue or black ink pen

On your application:

Be honest on your application

Do not exaggerate your education or experience

Check your spelling—get it right

Do not use abbreviations

Use correct English

Leave no blanks! Use n/a (not applicable) if the information requested does not apply to you

Sign and date the application

When the application asks what wage or salary you expect, write "Open"

* See a Sample Job Application in Resources at the end of the guide

How Parents May Help

- Help make a list of contacts who could be approached about potential openings
- Help write down a 20 to 30-second "speech" that emphasizes the type of job your young adult is looking for and his or her best qualities. If possible, have him or her memorize this.
- Role play giving the quick introduction
- Remind your son or daughter to update their resume every time they complete a training course, add a volunteer activity, or work at a job
- Remember to consider your transportation options when searching for a job. If you rely on public transportation, you'll need to ensure you can get to and from any job for which you are applying. We discuss more about transportation options in the following section.

4. Interviewing for a Position

The purpose of a job interview is to see if there is a match between the type of work the employer has available and the type of work that you would like and could do. Sometimes there's a match, and sometimes not. Remember, it's not just a question of whether you have the skills to do the job; it's also a question of fit for this particular position, with this particular boss, in this particular culture, and in this particular company.

Make It Easy on Yourself

- Take a "help sheet," your resume, and blue or black ink pen with you
- Use your best printing and be neat
- Be prepared to answer and discuss questions in an interview
- Re-read the application form before you turn it in to make sure it presents you in a positive way
- Use phone numbers that have the capability to have voicemail and the message is appropriate for employers to listen to

- Follow up with an employer after completing an online application with a phone call to introduce yourself and make them aware that YOU have applied for the opening
-

Interviewing for a job has rules, like many other aspects of the job search process. You'll make a better impression by learning and following these rules.

Rule 1: Be Professional *Before* the Interview

Little things count. Hiring managers are watching everything you do throughout the process of applying and interviewing for a job. These range from:

- whether your resume has typos, or doesn't provide standard information such as your education or dates of previous employment
- how quickly you respond to requests for writing samples and references
- whether you met the deadline for applying
- how you treat the receptionist.

Rule 2: Be Professional at the Interview

You are interested in making a good first impression on the interviewer. Here's how:

- Take care with your appearance. Be sure to take a shower or bath that day and use deodorant. Brush your teeth and your hair. Dress in clean clothes that are not too tight or revealing; a suit and tie or a nice skirt and blouse are always appropriate.
- Be on time (but not too early) for the interview.
- Know your interviewer's name and be sure to call them by their title and last name (such as Mr. Brown or Ms. Bryant) when speaking to them.
- Look the interviewer in the eye and greet him or her when you are introduced.
- Do not be negative about the people who have employed you in the past, even if you didn't like that job.

Rule 3: Be Prepared to Answer Questions about Yourself

Be prepared with answers to questions on:

- What your previous job was
- What you liked and didn't like about your previous job(s)
- Any education, training, and skills that prepare you for the new position
- The reason you left your last job
- How to contact previous employers

If needed, you and your job coach or family member can write out answers to these questions and you can practice the answers.

You cannot be asked questions about any disability or use of medication(s). However, your interviewer may ask whether you need any accommodation to perform the job if you were offered it (this is an exception to the usual rule that questions regarding disability should come after a job offer).

Rule 4: Be Prepared to Ask Questions about the Job and the Employer

As part of the interview process, you need to find out basic information about the "rules" of your new workplace:

- Job description and tasks.
- Hours that you have to be at the job
- Break schedule (when, how often, and where are breaks taken)
- Uniform or dress code
- Pay and rules for overtime
- Allowable cell phone and computer use and whether texting is permissible
- What to do if you are sick or have an appointment that can't be scheduled after work
- Types of training available and whether they are voluntary or required and who pays
- Probation period

Disclosing a Disability

While there is no easy answer to whether you should disclose your disability, it is important to remember that disclosure is required to secure "reasonable accommodations" in the workplace (see below). In

addition, advantages to disclosure include legal protection against discrimination, reducing stress of "hiding" a disability, and improving self-advocacy and self-confidence.

The National Collaborative on Workforce and disability for Youth has developed a workbook to help youth make informed decisions about disclosure; see "The 411 on Disability Disclosure: a Workbook for Youth with Disabilities" at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure>

A short version of the workbook, along with links to other online resources, can be found at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-21>

See also *The Way to Work*, Chapter 4 "Work Experience and Disability Disclosure."

Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship

Reasonable accommodations are adjustments or modifications provided by an employer to enable people with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities. Employers do not have to provide any accommodation that would pose an undue hardship on the business (defined as significant difficulty or expense, based on resources and the operation of the business).

Employers must provide a reasonable accommodation if a person with a disability needs one in order to **apply** for a job, **perform** a job, or **enjoy benefits equal to those offered to other employees**. Accommodations vary with the individual; not all people with disabilities (or even all people with the same disability) will require the same accommodation.

It is important to know (or have a good idea) what accommodation you require before talking to any employer about a job. It is also important to know how to ask for an accommodation. Once you request an accommodation, you and your employer should discuss your specific needs and identify appropriate options. Your employer *may* ask for documentation of your disability and why the accommodation is needed, including how the impairment may limit a major life activity (like sitting, standing, or performing manual tasks) and how the accommodation would help you perform your job.

You may ask for an accommodation or the employer may offer to provide one. Once requested, you and our employer should discuss your needs and identify the appropriate reasonable accommodation.

Accommodations usually fall into one of these categories:

- Equipment.
- Accessible materials
- Changes to the workplace
- Job-restructuring.
- Working from home
- Modified work schedule
- Leave
- Policy modifications
- Modifying supervisory methods
- Job coaching

For specific examples of how such accommodations may be made for you, see the Searchable Online Accommodation Resource on the Job Accommodation Network at www.askjan.org.

See also the Mid-Atlantic ADA Information Center (www.adainfo.org), 1-800-949-4232 for more information about rights under the law, reasonable accommodation, or disclosure.

Example of a Job Application

Please fill this out and keep it handy because most job applications ask for this information!

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Name (First, Middle, Last): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: |__|__| Zip Code: |__|__|__|__|__|

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Social Security Number: |X|X|X|-|X|X|-|__|__|__|

Have you been convicted of a crime within the last five years? Yes _____ No _____

POSITION/AVAILABILITY:

Position Applied For: _____ Full Time _____ Part Time _____

Seasonal _____ When can you start: _____

Desired Wage: \$ |__|__|. |__|__| / Hour

Please check below the days and times you can work.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

EDUCATION HISTORY:

School Name & Type (Vocational, High School, GED or College)	City & State	Years Attended	Completed (Yes or No)

JOB EXPERIENCE

Employer: _____

Job Title _____

City: _____ State: _____

Dates Worked: |__|/|__| to |__-__|/|__|

Supervisor: _____

Phone: |__|_|_|_| - |__|_|_|_| - |__|_|_|_|_|

Email: _____

Your Responsibilities:

Wage: |__|_|_|/hour Hours Worked Per Week |__|_|

Reason for Leaving: _____

May We Contact Your Employer? Yes ____ No ____

Employer: _____

Job Title _____

City: _____ State: _____

Dates Worked: |__|/|__| to |__-__|/|__|

Supervisor: _____

Phone: |__|_|_|_| - |__|_|_|_| - |__|_|_|_|_|

Email: _____

Your Responsibilities:

Wage: |__|_|_|/hour Hours Worked Per Week |__|_|

Reason for Leaving: _____

May We Contact Your Employer? Yes ____ No ____

PERSONAL REFERENCES:

Name	Title/Relationship	Phone Number	Email

5. Staying on the Job

Starting and keeping a new job can be stressful for anyone. However, knowing some general rules for workplace behavior will help you succeed. Most companies have a clear policy or handbook that provides this information. Take the time to review it, and sit down with your boss or your job coach to ask questions if any part of it is not clear before you begin working.

Being a Good Employee

Here are suggestions to help you keep your job and avoid some mistakes people make when they start a new job.

- **Keep track of your schedule.** Make an extra copy to keep in a safe place or use an app on your phone that will remind you of when you need to leave to go to your job or come back from your break.
- **Arrive on time.** Being late frequently will get you fired. If you are late once, explain why. Be sure to plan how you are going to get to and from work and allow extra time for bad weather, rush hour, etc. Have a backup plan for getting to work.
- **Be professional.** It always helps to have good manners. Greet your co-workers and your supervisor every day and be polite to customers or visitors. Wear clean clothes that are appropriate for your workplace. Keep your hair and teeth brushed and be sure to shower or bathe every day.
- **Ask questions.** Your boss does not expect you to know everything; it is ok to ask questions. There are no dumb questions.
- **Strive to get better.** Ask your supervisor to tell you what you are doing well, what they would like to see you change, and make an effort to apply this information to your work. You may have to take the initiative and set up a meeting to get this feedback. If you are a DARS client, you will have regular evaluation meetings.

What Not to Do

All employers are looking for well-mannered, professional employees who do their job to the best

of their ability. It's ok to make mistakes sometimes or to have to ask questions. However, some things will get you fired, including:

- Being late a lot or not showing up
- Being rude, lying, or breaking the company rules
- Using drugs or alcohol on the job
- Stealing
- Being unprofessional (using bad language, not dressing appropriately or having bad hygiene, or sharing too much)
- Saying bad things about the company or your co-workers (to other coworkers or on Facebook or other social media)

Leaving a Job on a Good Note

Generally, you want to give your supervisor advanced warning, at least two weeks, if you plan to quit, so you can leave on good terms. Be honest and polite when telling your boss why you're leaving. Be careful about speaking negatively about former employers or coworkers when you leave a job.

Ask for a reference before leaving. If you leave on good terms, you will get a good reference for future job.

Asking for Help: Self-Advocacy

Speaking up for yourself and asking for what you need on the job is called "self-advocacy." This may be difficult if you are shy or prefer not to talk to others.

But self-advocacy is a skill that comes in handy throughout life, not just when working. Being a good self-advocate means you:

- are able to identify that there is an obstacle or difficulty on your job, and then seek out assistance to have the issue resolved
- can negotiate for yourself (work with others to reach an agreement that will meet your needs)
- know your rights and responsibilities on the job
- are familiar with the resources that are available to you (such as the written rules in the employee handbook to your job coach and the human

resources department at your company)

- explain your disability either by the use of written words, pictures or gestures

Self-Advocacy Resources

I'm Determined

The I'm Determined project is a state directed project funded by the Virginia Department of Education, focuses on providing direct instruction, models, and opportunities to practice skills associated with I'm Determined behavior. The I'm Determined website offers valuable tools for youth to learn and for parents to help teach these skills. www.imdetermined.org

It's My Choice

By William T. Allen, PhD from the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities www.Mn.gov/mnddc/extra/publications/choice/Its_My_Choice.pdf

Getting Around: Transportation Options

People with disabilities may benefit from travel training and from reduced fares for Washington-area bus and subway. Taxi companies also provide reduced rates and special services for persons with disabilities.

Non-Driver Identification Card

Since many reduced fare programs—whether for students, persons with a disability or senior citizens require proof of age and/ or photo identification, a worthwhile first step is to obtain a non-driver identification card from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). (This ID can also be used as photo identification when traveling by air).

You must be a resident of Virginia to obtain an ID card. These cards have no age restriction and are available for an adult or child who does not hold a learner's permit or driver's license.

An adult ID card expires at the end of the month in which you were born when you reach an age divisible by five; e.g. 20, 25, 30, etc. A child ID card expires on

the child's 16th birthday.

All of the information a customer needs to prepare for a DMV visit is available on the DMV web site at http://dmv.state.va.us/webdoc/citizen/legal_presqa.asp, or by calling the agency's toll-free telephone number at 1-866-DMV-LINE

Travel Training

A key element of independence is being able to get around on public transportation for one's work and social life. The ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia offers **free** travel training on Washington-area bus and subway routes for people with disabilities. www.ecnv.org 2300 Clarendon Blvd., Arlington, VA. Call (703) 525-3268.

Metro Disability ID Card

All jurisdictions in the Washington area offer reduced transportation fares, but you will first need to obtain a free Metro Disability ID card. You will need to fill out an application and have a health care professional certify the individual's disability. Call 202-962-2700 or download an application from http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/doc/Reduced_Fare_Application.pdf

The Metro Disability ID card is good on Metro buses in the District as well as ART in Arlington. CUE, Fairfax Connector, RideOn, TheBus, VRE and MARC also accept it.

Reduced Farecards/Bus Passes and/or SmarTrip Card

One option for reduced fares is a reduced fare bus pass or farecard (metro). These are sold at many area Giant and Safeway stores, Metro sales offices and transit stores. You may have to show your Metro Disability ID and photo identification.

Use your Metro Disability ID to purchase a SmarTrip card that is encoded for discount fares. SmarTrip cards can be purchased online at www.MetroOpensDoors.com and click under "Fares." (you must be a registered Metro Disability ID cardholder and you'll have to use a major credit card); at Metro sales offices; and transit stores (see list at end of this appendix). Every public transit service in the region is using SmarTrip *except* for The Bus, OmniRide, OmniLink, MARC and VRE.

It is highly recommended that you register your

SmarTrip card. If you lose it, you will get a replacement card for \$5 that includes the fare value of the lost card at the time you reported the loss.

Add value to your SmarTrip card in any Metro station at the farecard machines or on Metrobus.

Using Public Transportation

A good place to start to learn about available routes is ComuterPage.com with links to Virginia and Maryland bus and rail services. See www.comuterpage.com

In Alexandria, see www.dashbus.com

In Arlington, see www.arlingtontransit.com

In Fairfax, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/

In Fairfax City, see www.cuebus.org

Disabled Placard/Plates

In Virginia you need to get a MED-10 form for a disabled parking placard or license plate. You can pick one up at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), or you can get one from their website at <http://dmv.state.va.us>. A physician must fill out the form. Bring the completed form to the DMV.

You can get a placard or a plate, or both. Placards offer flexibility since you can move it into any car in which you are the driver or a passenger. You will need to pay a fee and you will receive your placard or plate on the spot. You can do it by mail, but the process does take longer.

Paratransit Options

MetroAccess is the regional shared-ride door to door service established by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) under provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. MetroAccess provides transportation services to persons who, under certain circumstances, are unable to travel to or from a bus stop or rail station.

To be eligible for MetroAccess service, a person must meet one of the following conditions:

(1) Have a disability as defined by the ADA **AND** be unable as a result of disability to utilize fixed-route transportation (Metrobus and Metrorail);

OR (2) Need to use a ramp or wheelchair lift to use a public transit vehicle, but an accessible public transit vehicle is not being used at the time, date, and on the route you would travel. (Please note: All Metrobuses are wheelchair accessible);

OR (3) Be unable to travel to or from a bus stop or rail station due to a disability.

An application must be completed and certified by a health care professional detailing your disability and the need for paratransit services. An in-person interview and functional assessment is also required. This process can take up to three months.

You may register to travel with a personal care assistant at the time of application. The personal care assistant rides free of charge when travelling with you on MetroAccess. (301) 562-5360 (Voice), (301) 588-7535 (TTY) www.wmata.com/metroaccess.

STAR (Arlington County)

STAR is Arlington's prearranged, reserved-trip service for persons with disabilities who are eligible for MetroAccess. STAR fares and ticket books for discounted taxi fares are available through the Commuter Stores and CommuterDirect.com. Eligible seniors and disabled persons may register to order these products by calling [Commuter Direct.com](http://CommuterDirect.com)® at (703) 228-RIDE (7433), TDD (Virginia Relay Center - hearing impaired only): (800) 828-1120.

Arlington County residents currently certified eligible for MetroAccess are automatically certified for STAR. Rides are provided on a curb-to-curb basis. Drivers park in front of the address and assist riders into and out of the vehicle.

For more information on STAR: (703) 892-8747 (Voice) STAR@arlingtontransit.com (E-mail)

TaxiAccess (Fairfax County)

TaxiAccess is a program that provides subsidized taxicab service to Fairfax County residents who are registered with MetroAccess. Like STAR in Arlington, TaxiAccess users can purchase coupon books good toward taxicab rides at one-third of the face value. See <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/taxiaccess.htm> for information on how to apply, obtain coupons, and Fairfax-area cab companies that accept the coupons.

Fastran (Fairfax)

Fastran offers specialized transportation services for Fairfax County and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church residents who participate in human service agency programs. All Fastran riders must be certified by a participating agency before utilizing the service. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/forms/darapprev5.pdf>

DOT

DOT is the City of Alexandria's specialized transportation service for residents of Alexandria and visitors who cannot use regular transit buses or rail due to their disability. Trips are provided by taxicabs and wheelchair accessible vans.

The eligibility process is similar to that for Metro Access. For more information or to receive an application, please contact the Paratransit Coordinator at (703) 746-4079. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=6538>

Explore the Potential for Driving

The Woodrow Wilson Workforce Center (WWRC) offers comprehensive driving services.

Driving services are managed and provided through the Occupational Therapy (OT) Department. This state-certified program is comprised of Certified Driving Instructors (CDI's) and Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (CDRS's).

Occupational Therapists assess vision, perception, cognition and motor skills in order to determine an individual's feasibility for obtaining a driver's license. Having a learner's permit or driver's license is not a prerequisite for this service. Following the evaluation, a report is generated with detailed, individualized recommendations. For more information, visit <http://www.wwrc.virginia.gov/DrivingServices.htm>

Technology to Empower Young Adults for Transition in the Workplace

Empowering Employment a suite of tablet and software apps created by The Arc of Northern Virginia in collaboration with Oneder, a software programmer. The apps support a person with DD regarding travel to work and the performance of their job duties. Over the last two years, The Arc of Northern Virginia designed and launched the first app, TravelMate, which provides the user with step by step interactive instruction on how to navigate public transit between home and work. By the end of 2016 EmployMate will be launched. Oneder's software is unique in its ability to support a spectrum of functional needs. It can easily customize each user's program with visual smart scenes and stories, video modeling, a grid based sentence builder, GPS technology, training data tracking and lesson sharing including a content library. It can also be used in any language (text and audio) and also uses pictures and videos from the young adult's real life situations

Once TravelMate and EmployMate are set up to meet an individual's specific needs, the individual can view the steps repeatedly on their own or with family and friends. Through viewing the scenarios with real time videos and photos, family members more easily let go of feelings of fear and anxiety about their young person traveling and working as independently as they are able.

This feature enables and empowers the person with DD to do their job without needing to involve colleagues to show them what they need to do on a regular basis. By having control over their own ability to do their job, they are not dependent on peers, but equals as employees and colleagues. To learn more about these apps, contact Kymberly DeLoatche at kdeloatche@thearcofnova.org and visit <https://thearcofnova.org/washington-business-journal-2016-innovation-award/>

APPLYING FOR BENEFITS: Social Security Disability Programs

You may begin the application process for Social Security benefits the month after your child turns 18. The first step is just to *determine eligibility* for any benefit program; the Social Security Administration (SSA) will decide which program is appropriate.

SSI vs. SSDI

For both Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), *a person must meet SSA's definition of disability*. Disability is defined as the inability to engage in Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) by reason of any medical (physical and/or mental or blind) impairment. Your disability must have lasted or be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months or result in death. For 2017, the wage limit for the SGA is \$1,170 gross income/month.

SSI. SSI is a cash assistance program for those with limited income AND are either 65 years old or older or blind or disabled. Adult SSI beneficiaries must have limited income and resources (\$2,000 in assets); parents' income does not count for adult applicants. You do not have to have any work history. Monthly benefit payments are determined by the current benefit rate (\$735 a month in 2017), minus any "countable income" (see section "Managing Benefits While You Work"). If eligible for SSI, you will also be eligible for Medicaid.

SSDI. While SSI is a needs based program, SSDI is an insurance program with benefits dependent on previous payments into the system. In other words, SSDI beneficiaries must have worked enough (or their parents or spouses must have worked long enough) to have made contributions into FICA. Monthly benefit payments are based on the worker's lifetime average earnings covered by Social Security.

Applying for Benefits

The steps for applying are:

Start with a disability report. Go to the website at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/ssi.htm> and click on Disability Report for Adults. (You may also call 1-800-772-1213 or go to a Social Security Field Office.) Fill in as much information here as you can prior to your appointment at the local office. The application asks for names, addresses and telephone numbers of doctors and therapists who have treated your child and information on any hospitalizations. More descriptive medical records—such as a letter explaining a diagnosis or evaluations by therapists or schools—can be brought to the intake meeting (make copies!).

You may also complete the application at the appointment at the local SSA office, although this means taking all your medical records with you and considerably more time with the interviewer. If you do not have access to a computer, you can request an application be mailed to you when you call the 800 number.

You cannot complete the application for benefits online; you must call Social Security for an appointment.

Call Social Security. To make an appointment, call **1-800-772-1213** (TTY **1-800-325-0778**) between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday or contact your local Social Security office. It is best to call the 800 number rather than the local office as field offices are under staffed and the hold times can be very long. You will be greeted by an automated answering attendant, who will prompt you to state why you are calling; say "Apply for SSI."

The auto attendant will ask for you to say or key in your child's Social Security number. You will then be directed to a representative. During the phone interview, the representative will take information and enter it into a computer, which will secure the date of the application.

--Paperwork will be mailed to you. Fill it out and return within the allotted timeline.

--The document generated during the phone interview will also be mailed, to be signed for

accuracy.

--Before mailing anything back to the agency, be sure to make copies.

Set up a screening interview. During the previous phone interview, the representative will set up a screening, which continues the application process, at your local Social Security of office.

Alexandria Office

PLAZA 500, Suite 190
6295 Edsall Road
Alexandria, VA 22312
1-800-772-1213

Arlington Local Office

401 Wilson Blvd. Suite 200
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 235-1188

Fairfax Local Office

11212 Waples Mill Rd
Fairfax, VA 22030-7401
1-800-772-1213

SSA Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9:00 - 3:00
Wednesday 9:00 - 12:00

Go to the screening interview. Bring to the intake interview any and all information to prove your child's age, citizenship, disability, and lack of assets/resources:

- Original birth certificate (or other proof of age and citizenship) and Social Security card
- Documentation to verify your address
- Copy of Special Needs Trust, guardianship or conservator order
- Individual Education Plan
- Income slips if your child has income
- Information on any assets your child owns like a savings account, investments, title to a car or life insurance. *These cannot total more than \$2,000 for SSI benefits (unless held in a Special Needs Trust).* Note that for programs with income limits, SSA considers parents' income and assets up until your child turns 18; individuals over 18 years of age are considered independent households.
- If you have *not* completed the application online,

bring the required medical records and contact information to the screening.

--Checkbook or other papers that show a bank account number to have benefits deposited directly to a Representative Payee account.

Wait for eligibility determination. The agency will send your Disability Report Form and medical history to the Disability Determination Service (DDS). DDS may OR may not request more information such as work history, when the disability began, and what treatment has been given. DDS may also request, on behalf of SSA, a medical or psychological exam (SSA pays for exam by a physician chosen by SSA).

A decision is made in approximately 60 days about whether you are eligible for benefits. If you are denied, you have 60 days to appeal.

Set up a Representative Payee account. Once your child receives benefits, you will need to set up a Representative Payee account; be sure to title the account correctly (SSA has suggested wording). *Automatic deposit of benefits is required.*

Be aware that **SSI is intended to cover living expenses like rent, food, and utilities.** For example, it is recommended that you charge your adult child rent if he or she lives in the family home. Rent charged must be at least 30% of the current federal benefit amount (\$721 a month for 2014) to get the maximum SSI benefit.

APPLYING FOR BENEFITS: Medicaid Waiver Programs

This information is adapted from the The Arc of Northern Virginia's website. For more information, www.thearcfnova.org/programs/waivers

Family income and family assets are not a consideration under the Medicaid Waiver program if your child's personal income and assets qualify them, they have a disability diagnosis, and they meet functioning eligibility criteria. Visit our YouTube page <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RGssERytLI> for a recorded webinar on the new Waiver system effective September 2016.

You can read the latest information on the new Waivers from the state at <http://www.mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/> or call their hotline at 1-844-603-9248.

Eligibility Criteria

There are criteria everyone must meet to be eligible for a Medicaid Waiver:

- (1) **Functioning ability:** This is determined by the VIDES survey. The VIDES has one test for children aged 0-3, one for children ages 3-18, and one for adults. The surveys assess the person's need for assistance with a variety of daily live and independence skill activities.
- (2) **Diagnosis:** Persons applying for the Waivers must meet the diagnostic requirements for the particular Waiver they are seeking
 - a. **Developmental Disabilities Waivers** include the Community Living Waiver, Family and Individual Supports Waiver and Building Independence Waiver. The child from birth to age 9 and have a developmental disability or be at developmental risk OR over 9 years old and have a current diagnosis of a developmental disability (including IQ score) that is signed by a licensed psychologist. The particular type of Developmental Disability Waiver that will be awarded will be based upon the needs of the person

with a disability at the time they are awarded a Waiver.

- b. **Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction (EDCD) Waiver** The person must have a medical nursing need in addition to a disability
 - c. **Technology Waiver** Person must need skilled nursing and be dependent upon technology-based medical support (e.g. tracheotomy, ventilator)
- (3) **Financial:** If the functioning and diagnostic criteria are met, then the child's income and assets are considered. Children under 18 must have no more than \$1,000 in their name including all accounts and assets other than those in a Special Needs Trusts. Special Needs Trusts are not considered when testing financial eligibility. People over 18 have an asset cap of \$2,000. Everyone receiving a Waiver has a monthly income cap of 300% of the current Social Security Supplemental Security Income amount (SSI is \$733 in 2016, so max monthly income is \$2,199).

Waiting List Eligibility

You can be on the waiting list for a Developmental Disabilities Waiver and apply for either the EDCD or Technology Waiver, assuming you meet the eligibility for those other Waivers. Many people do this because the EDCD and Technology Waivers have no waiting list and can provide some interim supports.

Services Covered Under the Waivers

Disability Waivers generally cover supports in a variety of residential settings, from hourly staff at the home of a child's family, through 24/7 group home staff. These Waivers also cover a variety of employment and meaningful daytime supports for people no longer in school. Additional services include respite care, in-home skill building supports, companion care, assistive technology, environmental modifications, therapeutic consultations, non-medical transportation, private duty nursing, skilled

nursing, peer mentoring, community guides, and Personal Emergency Response System (PERS).

The Community Living Waiver is the one Waiver that pays for 24/7 staffing which is awarded based upon the needs of the person who will be receiving support.

The EDCD Waiver covers personal care, respite care, medication monitoring, and the Personal Emergency Response (PERS) system. Support hours are generally capped at 56 hours/week, though exceptions can be made.

The Technology Waiver covers personal care for adults, private duty nursing, respite care, and environmental modifications, and assistive technology.

Where to Apply for Medicaid Waivers

Alexandria City CSB: (703) 746-3400

Arlington DHS/IDD Services: (703) 228-1700

Fairfax/Falls Church CSB/IDS: (703) 324-4400

For the EDCD Waiver Only, Contact:

Alexandria City: (703) 746-5700

Arlington County: (703) 228-1510

Fairfax County: (703) 324-7500

MANAGING BENEFITS WHILE YOU WORK

If you receive Supplementary Security Income (SSI) and work (earned income), your benefits might be reduced based on the amount you earn. If you receive unearned income (e.g., SSDI, child support, trust income or an insurance settlement), the Social Security Administration (SSA) first applies a \$20 "general income exclusion" against that unearned income. It then applies an "earned income" exclusion amounting to the first \$65 of wages you receive in a month and only takes into account one-half of your remaining wages. This means that less than one-half of your earnings are counted in figuring out your net SSI payment amount.

For examples of how SSA applies the general income exclusion and the earned income exclusions to SSI payments,

see: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/eng/ssi-only-employment-supports.htm#8=&ao=1>

However, SSA has several programs that will help you keep benefits while you work. Remember that your income is much higher if you work than if you don't; in other words, don't let fear of loss of benefits drive your decision about employment.

Student Earned Income Exclusion

This exclusion allows individuals under the age of 22 who regularly attend school to exclude earned income up to a certain amount each month, up to a prescribed amount each year. These limits are adjusted for cost-of-living increases.

Individuals not able to claim the full amount in a month can carry the balance over to the next month.

Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)

SSA deducts from your gross earnings the cost of certain impairment related items and services that you need to work. Examples of such items are attendant care services, certain transportation costs, medical devices, medications, and residential modifications, among others.

Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS)

PASS allows an individual to set aside unearned or earned income to achieve an occupational objective. This money can be over the \$2,000 resource limit. SSA excludes any contributions from earned income calculations.

Virginia's Medicaid Works

This is a Medicaid plan option that enables workers with disabilities to earn higher income and retain more in savings, or resources, while ensuring continued Medicaid coverage.

This voluntary plan option will allow enrollees to have annual earnings in 2014 as high as \$47,460 and resources up to \$33,862.

Medicaid Works is available to current and new Medicaid enrollees who are blind or disabled, have total countable income of no more than \$778 per month for a single individual (\$1,049 if a couple) and resources of no more than \$2,000 if single (\$3,000 if a couple).

You need to be employed or have documentation from an employer establishing the date when employment will begin and be between 16 and 65 years old.

For more information on SSI, SSDI, and working, see the Social Security Administration's "Red Book" at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook/index.html>

Ticket to Work Program

If you receive SSI or SSDI benefits but believe you may be able eventually to earn enough money to support yourself and get off the benefit rolls, consider using the Ticket to Work Program. **The Ticket program is free and voluntary.**

With Ticket to Work, you may:

- Gain work experience and receive vocational rehabilitation services without automatically losing disability benefits;
- Return to benefits if you have to stop working;
- Continue to receive healthcare benefits; and
- Be protected from receiving a medical continuing disability review while using the Ticket and if you are making the expected progress with work or educational goals.

For more information, go to www.choosework.net or <http://www.ssa.gov/work/overview.html>.

When you participate in the Ticket program, you are aiming to reduce or eliminate your dependence on SSDI and/or SSI cash benefits.

How It Works

If you decide to participate, you can contact any authorized employment service provider in your area to see if the services they offer are right for you. For a list of authorized employment networks, go to www.yourtickettowork.org.

You may also receive services from the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS), the state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency. Such services include training, career counseling, vocational rehabilitation, job placement, and ongoing support services necessary to achieve a work goal.

The Ticket program is a two-way street: you receive

free assistance from your employment services provider or DARS in preparing for, finding and keeping a job. In return, you pledge to Social Security that you will take specific steps within a specific timeframe to: (1) Work at a specified earnings level or, (2) Complete certain educational or training requirements.

The steps and timeframe are spelled out in your Individual Work Plan (IWP), which DARS and/or the employment services provider will help you write. Taking the agreed-upon steps toward employment within Social Security's timeframes is called making "timely progress."

To Avoid Problems with Your Benefits

Open immediately all mail you receive from the Social Security Administration (SSA)

Meet all deadlines from the SSA

Set up a filing system and keep copies of everything you send to SSA and everything you receive from the agency

Report employment to Social Security and keep your wage records in your file

Submit pay stubs and IRWE receipts once every month (including months that are not worked). You must keep a record confirming submission, i.e. fax confirmation page, certified mail receipt, etc.

Any major life change (address, marriage, employment, loss of job, divorce, and children) must be reported to SSA immediately, both to 1-800-772-1213 and to local SSA field office

Remember that there is a resource limit of \$2000 in order to remain eligible for SSI benefits

Social Security ordinarily reviews your medical condition from time to time to see whether you are still disabled. Social Security uses a process called the [Continuing Disability Review](#), or CDR. If you assign your Ticket to an approved service provider before

you receive a CDR notice and you make “timely progress” following your employment plan, Social Security will not conduct a review of your medical condition. If you assign your Ticket after you receive a CDR notice, Social Security will continue with your scheduled medical review.

For more information regarding the initial application process, working while disabled, and other work incentives you may be eligible for, contact:

Marilyn Morrison, CWIC
VaACCSES
(571) 339-1305
mmorrison@vaaccses.org

SECURING A FUTURE: Estate Planning and Special Needs Trusts & ABLE Accounts

All parents should have a will, and those who have children with a disability need to create a Special Needs Trust to protect any public benefits that child may receive. If your child is approaching his or her 18th birthday (age of majority), you might also consider some form of guardianship if he or she needs and will continue to need help with medical, financial, and legal decision-making.

Creating a Will

A will is critical to ensuring that your wishes are carried out regarding how and to whom your assets are divided after your death. While many wills create family trusts, to avoid jeopardizing the benefits or services of your heir with a disability you need to create a separate *Special Needs Trust* (see below).

Also retirement accounts (such as an IRA or 401K), are considered outside the will; if you wish to leave part of those retirement monies to your disabled heir (and keep him or her eligible for benefits), you will need to designate the Special Needs Trust as a beneficiary.

Special Needs Trusts (SNT)

Special Needs Trusts (sometimes called supplemental benefits trusts) allow families to provide for the future financial stability of their loved one with a disability. Since some federal benefits programs impose severe limits on beneficiary’s assets and resources, your son or daughter could be disqualified from benefits if he or she received (for example) an inheritance or

proceeds from a lawsuit. However, the law allows families to set up a Special Needs Trust (SNT) that can act as a repository for an inheritance, stocks, property, insurance settlements or other assets *without* a loss of public benefits.

If your family member with a disability receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid (or you are contemplating having them apply for these benefits), creating a Special Needs Trust is a necessity; these programs limit your loved one to just \$2,000 in assets to remain eligible.

Although no income or asset limits currently exist for the Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) program, individuals receiving SSDI benefits may also set up a first-party Special Needs Trust (see below) for money management purposes.

Two Kinds of Trusts

Most Special Needs Trusts are ***third-party trusts*** (family-funded trusts) established by parents or with an authorized non-profit, such as The Arc of Northern Virginia, for their children with a disability. The person establishing the trust, usually called the settlor, chooses to make some of his or her own assets available for the benefit of the beneficiary. These trusts may be funded during the parents’ lifetime (you can put money in them), but that money would no longer be available to you as the parent once it is in the trust. This is why most third-party trusts are funded from inheritances.

First-party trusts (self-funded or self-settled) are established by the beneficiary and always funded with *their own* resources. Common sources of funding for first-party trusts are structured settlements, paybacks from Social Security, and inheritances that mistakenly were given directly to the individual with the disability.

While many legal matters can be undertaken with a lawyer with a general background, SNTs are complicated enough to require the services of an elder law or estate attorney with expertise in disabilities and this particular kind of trust.

Setting Up a Trust

Special Needs Trusts can, and should be, set up as early as possible as part of the parents’ overall estate

planning. Third-party Special Needs Trusts can be funded while the parents are still alive (with the caveat that any money put in the trust cannot be withdrawn except to pay for services for the beneficiary).

Special Needs Trusts may be set up using an attorney in private practice (see the list in the resources section) or through the auspices of a trust managed by a nonprofit (www.thearcofnovatrust.org).

For either option, you will have to pay fees to set up the trust and, possibly, to manage the funds. The Arc of Northern Virginia's Trust program does not require a minimum deposit.

Uses of Trust Funds

Funds from the trust are usually not distributed directly to the beneficiary as that may jeopardize government benefits. Instead, they must be disbursed to third parties who provide goods and services for use and enjoyment by the beneficiary. Trust funds can be used for a variety of life-enhancing expenditures without compromising your loved one's eligibility for government benefits:

- Supplemental education and tutoring
- Out-of-pocket medical & dental costs
- Transportation (including purchase of a vehicle)
- Maintenance of vehicles
- Materials for a hobby or recreational activity
- Trips or vacations
- Entertainment such as movies or ballgames
- Computers, videos, furniture, or electronics
- Athletic training or competitions
- Special dietary needs
- Personal care attendant or escort
- Housing costs (although this may reduce SSI benefits)

Acting as Trustee

A trustee is the person who oversees trust assets and administers the trust provisions, including investing, account reporting and tax reporting, check writing, and disbursements. Professional legal and investment advice are crucial for trustees administering a Special Needs Trust themselves. However, for SNTS set up with The Arc of Northern Virginia, the family does not have this burden: trust

staff performs all administrative tasks and client relations and SunTrust Bank handles all fiduciary and investment duties. For more information about being a trustee, download a free handbook at: <http://www.specialneedsalliance.org/free-trustee-handbook>

ABLE Accounts

ABLE Accounts are an additional tool that may be used for some people with disabilities and their families to save for the future while protecting eligibility benefits.

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act enacted by Congress in late 2014 allows states to establish tax-advantaged savings accounts for certain individuals with disabilities for their disability related expenses. In addition, these funds would generally not be considered for supplemental security income (SSI) program, Medicaid, and certain other federal means-tested benefits.

ABLE Accounts do not replace the need for a Family Funded Special Needs Trust, but may be used in conjunction. ABLE Accounts are similar to First Party or Self-Funded Trusts in that they require a Medicaid payback upon the death of the beneficiary. To learn more about ABLE Accounts, visit www.ablenc.org. For a better understanding of the differences between Special Needs Trusts and ABLE Accounts visit, the Employment Toolbox on our website <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/entering-world-work/employment-toolbox/>

Understanding Legal Authority

Families often struggle to determine the need for and value of guardianship and other forms of legal authority, especially as they relate to "protecting the person." The answer to what is appropriate depends upon the person. *It is critical to remember that guardianship and similar measures are simply legal authority on a piece of paper. They cannot prevent someone from doing something or undo something that has been done.*

Dignity of Risk and Supported Decision Making

In recent years, a movement has grown to talk about the “dignity of risk” we all have to make decisions. The concept is simply that all people need help making some decisions and we all learn by making bad decisions. For example, many people without developmental disabilities rely on tax accountants or doctors to explain life decisions in simple terms they can understand. This idea is called “[supported decision making](http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/)” and there is a growing international movement towards this policy. A team of people who care about the person with a disability are asked by the person to work together to help them understand and make decisions. It does not involve taking away legal rights but does build a support team and a way to grow decision making ability and independence over time. It has no cost and is probably what you are already doing. You can learn more about Supported Decision Making and view webinars on the topic at <http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/>

“Dignity of Risk” also means understanding that it is okay to make some bad decisions. We are all allowed and it is often how we learn best. Many people learn from spending too much that it is hard to pay bills and learn from weight gain and health issues that they ate too much. This is a right all people have and exercise every day. People with disabilities should have the same opportunities to make decisions and learn through natural consequences and a support team about how to proceed the next time.

Guardianship and Conservatorship

Guardianship or conservatorship is a legal, court-ordered relationship in which one individual is appointed by the court to become the substitute decision maker for another. This is the most restrictive form of limiting legal rights. Guardians handle contract and medical decisions. Conservators manage financial affairs. You can have both or either restrictions in place and the same person can serve in both roles.

Guardians and conservators are appointed if someone cannot receive or evaluate information effectively to meet his or her health, care, and safety. A Circuit Court judge can decide that a person is incapacitated

and appoint a guardian and/or a conservator to act for the person. The appointment of a guardian or conservator is not a routine matter, and it is appropriate to take it very seriously, as the legal system does. Once in place, a guardianship is difficult to remove.

In essence, **guardianship** makes someone (like parents) responsible for *making financial, medical, social, and legal decisions* on behalf of a person who cannot make those decisions completely by themselves. In Virginia, a guardianship can be structured to fit the individual, with some rights taken away and others retained. An experienced attorney can assist you in crafting a guardianship that fits the individual and allows you to remain as a strong advocate for the individual with a disability.

A **conservator’s** decision making responsibility is focused on managing a person’s financial and property affairs. A conservator’s authority, like that of a guardian, may also be limited depending on the situation of the incapacitated person.

The court may appoint only a guardian, only a conservator, or both. For most young adults with a disability, only a guardian is necessary. The extent of the guardian’s or conservator’s authority will be set forth in the judge’s order and in the Virginia Code.

Typically, the young adult has less than \$2,000 in assets; the only income is from SSI or earnings that typically can be managed by a representative payee or by the individual with some assistance.

Considering Guardianship

In a guardianship, the law strikes a balance between preserving the rights and personal autonomy of an adult and the duty of the State of Virginia to protect individuals who lack sufficient capacity to make decisions regarding themselves or their property.

Families should consider less restrictive alternatives before petitioning for guardianship if they believe the individual may not fit the criterion of “incapacitated” (see below). Parents considering guardianship should keep in mind that:

- **Your child will not be labeled “incompetent.”** Virginia has eliminated that term from the law.

Now a person is found to be “incapacitated” to the extent that they cannot make certain decisions.

- Overall, it is important to realize that guardianship is a **very flexible system in Virginia**.
- Guardianships can be **tailored to the needs of your child**, allowing parents to remain in a strong advocacy position.
- As part of that flexibility, **guardianship need not take away all or even most of the individual’s rights**. It is very common, for example, to preserve the right to vote, the right to hold a driver’s license, or other rights.
- Even under guardianship, your adult child **can still participate in decision-making** about his or her life to the extent of their capabilities. The guardianship order will typically say that the individual with a disability will be consulted and his/her wishes taken into account.
- **Your child remains eligible for government benefits**. There is no loss of government benefits because someone has a guardian. The guardian’s income and assets are not counted when computing benefits for an adult individual with a disability.
- Guardianship **does not make you financially responsible for the person under guardianship**. For example, parents who are guardians do not have to provide food and shelter for their child but would be responsible for making the *decisions* about where their child would live and the kind of care he or she would receive.
- As a guardian, **you are not responsible for the financial, civil or criminal liabilities of your child**. If an individual under guardianship hurts someone or something, the guardian is not liable. If they were, few people would be willing to serve as a guardian.
- The process usually takes a few months and **costs approximately \$3,00-\$4,000** in the Northern Virginia area.

Parents are frequently appointed as guardians, but other family members, an attorney, a friend, or a public guardian may also serve in this capacity.

Obtaining Guardianship

To obtain guardianship, parents need to file a petition with the Circuit Court of the county in which the individual lives. Typically parents are appointed as co-guardians, which allows either to act independently. You must provide a medical or psychological evaluation of your loved one that supports the need for guardianship. You may ask the court to appoint “standby” guardians who would serve when you no longer can.

When the petition is filed, the court appoints a guardian ad litem (GAL). The GAL is an attorney in private practice appointed from an approved list. The GAL’s primary job is to ensure that the rights of the individual with the disability are protected. The GAL will therefore meet the individual, serve him or her with the court paperwork, and explain their rights. The GAL will also make a report to the Court giving an opinion as to whether the appointment of a guardian is necessary and who should be appointed.

After the GAL has filed a report, then a hearing is held at the Court. Typically the persons being appointed as guardians must attend the hearing, and after the hearing will go to the Clerk of the Court’s office to complete all necessary paperwork. The individual for whom the guardian is being appointed may choose to attend the hearing or not.

As a guardian, you are required to submit a report every year to the local department of social services; the court will provide a form.

Weighing Alternatives

The appointment of a guardian or a conservator should be considered only as a last resort. Again, petitioners for guardianship must provide evidence, and a judge must determine, that an individual is “incapacitated” in terms of making certain decisions.

However, if the person is not considered “incapacitated” but still needs help, the individual and his or her family may choose among several other options. These alternatives range from having a

caregiver (who has no legal authority to make decisions) to giving a trusted person a durable power-of-attorney (may make all medical, legal and financial decisions).

For example, an individual needing some assistance may be able to sign a Power of Attorney or Advance Medical Directive, appointing you or another family member as their agent for decision making. Powers of Attorney can be drafted by attorneys or you can use an online template. They are notarized, which often can be done by a local bank or any other notary. The cost is minimal or free.

It's important to remember that the individual must be capable of understanding what they are doing when they execute a Power of Attorney or Medical Directive. A Power of Attorney or Medical Directive *does not allow you as the agent to override the decision of the individual with the disability*. So if the individual enters into a contract he or she did not understand, the agent under a Power of Attorney cannot void that contract. If the individual is in the emergency room yelling that they do not want a shot or test, the agent under the Medical Directive cannot override that decision.

For a list of attorneys in the Northern Virginia area that specialize in guardianship, visit The Arc of Northern Virginia's online toolkit at www.thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/entering-world-work/employment-toolbox/

Determining a Decision-Making Role

Type	Decision-making Responsibilities	Notes
Full guardianship	All financial, legal, personal care, and social decisions	Individual must be incapacitated Guardian must file an annual report
Limited guardianship	Decisions on specific issues (e.g., medical & health care)	Individual must be incapacitated Guardian must file an annual report
Standby guardian	Person designated in guardianship order to become guardian when current guardian dies	Does not assume any duties until death of primary guardian
Full conservatorship	All financial decisions, including paying bills, investing money, and selling property. Conservator must post a surety bond.	Individual must be incapacitated Conservator must file annual report on all financial transactions
Limited conservatorship	Decisions on specific financial matters, such as paying bills or filling out tax returns, as specified by the judge. Conservator must post surety bond.	Individual must be incapacitated Conservator must file report on income and expenses
Representative payee	Person appointed by SSA to manage benefits ; responsible for using benefit to pay beneficiary's living expenses	Rep Payee must report annually to relevant agency (e.g., Social Security Administration)
Advance medical directive	Person with disability provides instructions about his or her wishes for health care treatment and designates an agent to make health care decisions when he or she cannot	Agent's powers are defined in the document Agent cannot override decisions
Durable power of attorney	Written authority giving a parent or another person (agent) power to make decisions on behalf of the individual with a disability (the principal). Agent may act even if principal becomes incapacitated.	Agent cannot override decisions Power ends if principal revokes it or dies.
Emergency order for adult protective services	Short-term guardianship (15 days) to handle an emergency or correct conditions causing an emergency	Local department of social services must apply to Circuit Court for temporary guardianship order
Caregiver	Individual providing care, paid or unpaid, to someone who cannot care for him or herself. No power to make medical, legal or financial decisions.	

Additional Resources

Career Interest & Occupational Information

<https://www.vawizard.org/vccs/Career.action>

Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov/k12/>

BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook

<http://www.bls.gov/oooh/home.htm>

<http://www.onetonline.org/>

<http://www.acinet.org/>

Autism Speaks Employment Tool Kit

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/employment>

<http://www.naviance.com/students/>

“How to Get a Job” tip sheet:

<http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/Resources/publications/Employment.pdf>

Grandin, Temple. “Choosing the Right Job” on Autism Research Institute website

http://www.autism.com/index.php/advocacy_grandin_job

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>

The Spectrum Careers: Jobs Portal for Individuals with Autism, Employers, and Service Providers

www.thespectrumcareers.com

Think Beyond the Label Jobs Portal

www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com

Job Accommodation Network

www.askjan.org

<http://www.careerbuilder.com/>

<http://www.monster.com>

Cover Letters & Resumes

<http://susanireland.com/resume/examples/>

<http://www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/ResumesInterviews.aspx>

<http://how-to-write-a-resume.org/>

Books

Bolles, R. N. *What color is your parachute?: A practical manual for job-hunters and career-changers*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed. 2011

Griffin, Cary, and David Hammis, et al. *Making Self Employment Work for People with Disabilities*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing. 2003.

Luecking, Richard. *The Way to Work: How to Facilitate Work Experiences for Youth in Transition*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing. 2009

A Parent’s Guide to Employment for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

www.Autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/docs/employment_tool_kit_parent_booklet.pdf

Visit our Transition POINTS Employment Tool Kit on our website for additional documents and updated information at:

www.thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/entering-world-work/employment-toolbox/

Resources Include

Attorneys Specializing in Guardianship & Special Needs Trusts

Selected List of Support Coordinators for Waivers for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

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