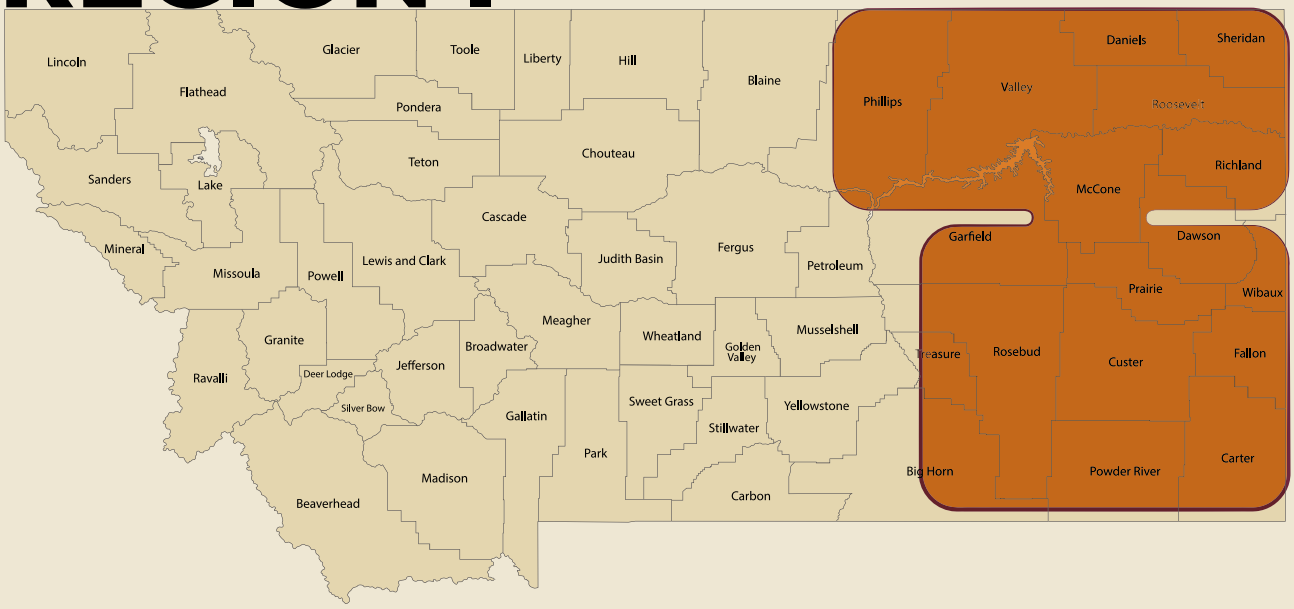
# MONTANA POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION GUIDANCE

## 2025-2026

# REGION I




UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA | Rural Institute For Inclusive Communities | MONTANA DPHHS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

# Acknowledgments

We extend our sincere gratitude to the many agencies and organizations whose collaboration and expertise made the development of this Postsecondary Transition Resource Guide possible.

Special thanks to:

- **Montana Empowerment Center**
- **The Department of Public Health and Human Services**
- **Pre-Employment Transition Services/Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services**
- **The Office of Public Instruction**
- **Montana Center for Inclusive Education**
- **North Central Independent Living Services**
- **NTACT:C (The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative)**

Your shared commitment to supporting youth with disabilities as they navigate the transition to adulthood has been instrumental in shaping this guide. We appreciate your dedication, insight, and ongoing partnership in empowering students and families across Montana.

This guide was also inspired by the **Region II Youth Transitions Resource Guide**, and we acknowledge its role in informing and influencing the structure and content of this resource.

## Community Resources

## Timelines for Transition

## Transition Planning Resources

# Community Resources

## Advocacy

- Montana Fair Housing Organization
- Disability Rights Montana
- Richland County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Custer Network Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

## Blind/Low Vision and Deaf/Harding of Hearing

- Montana DeafBlind Project
- Montana School for the Deaf and The Blind
- Assistive Technology Programs
- Helen Keller National Center

## Post-Secondary Education Options (besides traditional 4-year college)

- College Programs for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Community Colleges
- Montana Center for Inclusive Education

## Employment

- Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services
- Job Service Centers
- Pre-Employment Transition Services

## Food Banks, Emergency Shelters, Temporary Housing

- Richland County Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Food Banks/Pantries
- Custer Network Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

## Healthcare

- Ag Worker Health and Services

- One Health Care Centers
- Indian Health Service
- Northeast Montana Health Service

## Housing

- Homeword Organization (affordable housing)
- Housing Authorities
- Rural Development Program

## Information and Training Centers for Families

- Montana Empowerment Center (Parent Training and Information Center)
- Family Health Information Center

## Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Services

- Youth Dynamics
- Developmental Disabilities Program
- Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center

## Money Management, Financial Support, Public Assistance

- Children's Special Health Services Financial Assistance
- Offices of Public Assistance
- ABLE Accounts

## Transition Support, Resources, and Training Programs

- Assistive Technology Programs
- Montana Transition and Employment Projects
- Centers for Independent Living
- TRIO Educational Opportunity Centers

## Transportation

- Dial-A-Ride and Paratransit

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## ABLE Accounts

Normally, having too much money saved can disqualify someone from receiving certain government benefits. But with an ABLE account, a person with a disability can save up to $100,000 (or even more, depending on the benefits) without losing eligibility for programs. **ABLE accounts** are special savings accounts designed to help people with disabilities save money without affecting their eligibility for government benefits like **Medicaid** or **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**.

The funds can be used for disability-related expenses such as housing, healthcare, education, and transportation. Anyone—family, friends, or the account holder—can put money in the account, and the money grows tax-free, with tax-free withdrawals for eligible expenses.

These accounts are for U.S. citizens or legal residents who became disabled before age 26. This does not mean that they have to open the ABLE account by age 26—just that the disability began before this age. People who receive or are eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) are automatically able to get an account. If they are not getting SSI or SSDI, they may still be able to get an ABLE account if they have the certification of a disability.

### Resources on ABLE Accounts

The Montana ABLE Account website has application steps and more information on eligibility requirements:
https://savewithable.com/mt/home/plan-benefits.html

The ABLE National Resource Center has guides for employers, service providers, and individuals who want to open their own account:
https://www.ablenrc.org/

# Ag Worker Health and Services

Ag Worker Health & Services offers health care for agricultural workers and their families. They provide medical, dental, and mental health care at year-round clinics in Billings, Fairview, Dillon, and Lolo, Montana, as well as Powell, Wyoming. They also use mobile units and seasonal clinics to reach workers during busy farming seasons.

They make sure everyone can get care, no matter their ability to pay or whether they have insurance. To help with costs, they offer a sliding fee discount for all their services.

## Locations and Contact Information

Website: https://www.agworker.org/
Fairview Office
Address: 35511 County Road 134
Fairview, MT 59221
Phone: (406) 742-5201

# Assistive Technology Programs

**Assistive technology** is any tool, device, or equipment that helps people with disabilities or challenges do things they might otherwise find difficult. It can be something simple, like a magnifying glass, or more advanced, like a speech-generating device. These tools are designed to make everyday tasks easier, like communicating, moving around, learning, or working.

Examples include:

- Wheelchairs or walkers for mobility
- Hearing aids to help with hearing
- Apps or devices that help people with communication
- Tools like grabbers or special utensils for daily tasks

**MonTECH** is a program in Montana that helps people with disabilities live more independently by providing access to tools and technology. They offer devices like communication aids, mobility equipment, and tools for learning or daily living. MonTECH allows people to borrow these items at

no charge, and try them out before deciding if they want to buy something similar. They also provide training and support to help users and their families learn how to use the devices effectively.

**MonTECH website:** https://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/

**The Montana Assistive Technology Loan (MATL)** program helps people with disabilities pay for tools and equipment they need. It offers loans with low interest rates, so it's easier for individuals or families to buy these items. The program makes sure people can get the technology they need to live better and more independently, even if they can't pay for it all at once.

**MATL website: https://www.matl.ruraldynamics.org/**

## Centers for Independent Living

**Centers for Independent Living (CILs)** help people with disabilities of all ages live more independently through:

- **Information and referral:** They help people find things they need, like special equipment, money, fun activities, places to live, friends for support, and job opportunities.
- **Advocacy:** They help people speak up for themselves and get what they need, like figuring out their goals, making a plan to reach them, and improving their problem-solving skills.
- **Peer support**: People with disabilities can talk to each other for support and advice.
- **Independent living skills training:** They offer classes to teach people how to do everyday things, like managing money, socializing, planning fun activities, hiring personal care assistants, and using community resources.
- **Transition services:** They help people move from one living situation to another, like moving out of a care facility, going to college, or staying in the community instead of going to an institution.

**Note: Centers for Independent Living do not offer a place to live. They help people live independently in their own homes or communities by teaching them skills and providing support.

Centers for Independent Living can also assist special education teachers in these ways:

- **Providing information and resources:** CILs can offer information about assistive technology, educational materials, and community supports for students with disabilities.
- **Offering training and workshops:** CILs can teach teachers about independent living skills, self-advocacy, and disability awareness, which can help them support their students better.
- **Collaborating on transition planning:** CILs can work with schools to create personalized plans to help students prepare for life after high school.

## Locations and Contact Information

### Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow

- Phone number: 1-800-699-6319
- Website: https://liftt.org/
- Service Areas: Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, Golden Valley, McCone, Musselshell, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Treasure, Wibaux, Yellowstone

### North Central Independent Living Services

- Phone Number: 1-800-823-6245
- Website: https://ncils.org/
- Service Areas: Blaine, Cascade, Choteau, Daniels, Fergus, Glacier, Hill, Judith Basin, Liberty, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton, Toole, Valley

# Children’s Special Health Services Financial Assistance

If your child doesn’t have insurance, doesn’t have enough coverage, or doesn’t qualify for programs like Medicaid or Healthy Montana Kids, you might be able to get help from **Children's Special Health Services (CSHS)**.

CSHS can help if your family is struggling to pay for medical treatments, equipment, or other care that insurance doesn’t cover. To get this help, you’ll need to provide proof from a healthcare provider.

To qualify for financial help from Children's Special Health Services (CSHS), a child or young adult must:

- Be under 22 years old.
- Have a long-term physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition, or be at risk of developing one.
- Need extra medical care or support compared to most kids.
- Live in Montana and be a U.S. citizen or a qualified immigrant.
- Be enrolled in Healthy Montana Kids (Medicaid or CHIP) if they qualify.
- Have a family income that is at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Contact Information

- CSHS Phone Number: 1-800-762-9891
- Website with application form: https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd/cshs/CSHSFinancialAssistance

# College Programs for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

An **Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Program** gives students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the chance to go to college. These programs help students learn, make friends, and prepare for jobs in a supportive environment.

## What IPSE Programs Offer:

1. Classes:
    - Students take regular college classes or special courses to learn life and job skills.
2. Job Training:
    - Students get hands-on experience through internships and job training to prepare for work.
3. Campus Life:
    - Students join clubs, activities, and events to enjoy college life and make friends.
4. Support:
    - Staff and mentors help students succeed in school and life.
5. Certificates:
    - Students earn a certificate when they finish the program, showing their skills and accomplishments.

Thinkcollege.net has a search tool where people can look up the Inclusive Postsecondary Education Programs in their state. Montana's programs as of 2025 are:

- MOSSAIC at The University of Montana in Missoula: https://www.umt.edu/speech-language-hearing-occupational-sciences/dewit-ritecare-clinic/mossaic.php
- MSU Life Scholars at Montana State University in Bozeman: https://www.montana.edu/ehhd/lifescholars/

# Community Colleges

A **community college** is a school where people can take affordable classes to learn new skills, prepare for a job, or get ready to transfer to a four-year university.

## Key Features of Community Colleges:

1. Affordable Education:
    - Tuition is usually much lower than at universities, making it a cost-effective option.
2. Open to Everyone:
    - Most community colleges accept anyone with a high school diploma or GED.
3. Flexible Options:
    - They offer part-time, full-time, online, and evening classes to fit different schedules.
4. Career Training:
    - Many programs focus on skills for specific jobs, like nursing, automotive repair, or IT.
5. Path to a University:
    - Students can take the first two years of college at a community college, then transfer to a university to finish their degree.
6. Local Focus:
    - They are usually in or near your community and focus on meeting local education and job needs.

## Community Colleges in the Area

### Fort Peck Community College

Website: https://www.fpcc.edu/
Address: 605 Indian Ave, Poplar, MT 59255
Phone: (406) 768-6300

### Chief Dull Knife College

Website: http://www.cdkc.edu/
Address:1 College Dr, Lame Deer, MT 59043
Phone: (406) 477-6215

### Dawson Community College

Website: https://www.dawson.edu/
Address: 300 College Drive, Glendive, Montana 59330
Phone: (406) 377-9400

### Miles Community College

Website: https://www.milescc.edu/
Address: 2715 Dickinson Street, Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: 1.800.541.9281

## Custer Network Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

The Custer Network Against Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault (CNADA) in Montana helps people who have been hurt by domestic violence or sexual assault. Here's what they do:

1. **Support Survivors**: They listen to and support people going through tough times.
2. **Emergency Help**: They assist with safety planning, finding safe places to stay, and handling emergencies.
3. **Legal Help**: They guide survivors through legal steps like getting restraining orders and understanding their rights.
4. **Counseling**: They connect survivors with therapy and support groups to help them heal.
5. **Education**: They teach the community about domestic violence and sexual assault to help prevent it and reduce stigma.
6. **Connections to Resources**: They help survivors find other services like housing, healthcare, or financial aid.

### Locations and Contact Information

**Counties Served: Carter • Custer • Fallon • Garfield • Powder River • Rosebud • Treasure**

Website: https://cnada.org/
Address: 2200 Box Elder St. Suite #135
Miles City, Montana 59301

### 24 Hour Crisis Lines:

Miles City Cellphone: (406) 951-0475
Miles City Landline: (406) 234-0542
Baker: (406) 853-2991

## Developmental Disabilities Program

**The Montana Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP)** helps people with developmental disabilities live their lives to the fullest. They offer different services and supports to help these individuals be as independent as possible and participate in their communities.

**To qualify for Montana's Developmental Disabilities Program** a person must be found **"eligible"**. A person is eligible when they meet the requirements for developmental disabilities that are outlined in Montana law. The term "Developmental Disabilities" under Montana law means disabilities that affect the brain and nervous system, such as intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or similar conditions. These disabilities must start before the person turns 18, last a long time or be expected to last indefinitely, and cause significant challenges in daily life.

**Contact the Developmental Disabilities Program office closest to you** to ask about these requirements and the steps to apply for the program:

### Glasgow Office

- Address: 226 6th St. S. PO Box 472
  Glasgow, MT 59230
- Phone: (406) 228-8264
- FAX: (406) 228-8263

### Miles City Office

- Address: 2200 Box Elder #7
  Miles City, MT 59301
- Phone 1:(406) 232-2595
- Phone 2: (406) 232-1157
- FAX: (406) 232-8868

Website (includes descriptions of the three main Developmental Disabilities Program services): https://dphhs.mt.gov/BHDD/DisabilityServices/developmentaldisabilities/index

DDP services are available to people who qualify for Medicaid through programs called "**waivers**." One waiver, called the **Comprehensive 0208 Waiver**, has a long waiting list, but it provides a lifetime of services. Since the wait can be several years, it's a good idea to talk to a DDP Eligibility Specialist as soon as possible to get on this waitlist once the person qualifies for the Developmental Disabilities Program. There are other waivers through the **Department of Health and Human Services** that are available for children before or after they are on the waiting list.

A description of waivers, and action to steps to apply for them are available here: https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/hcbs/InfoSheetforMTHCBSWaivers.pdf

# Dial-A-Ride and Paratransit

## Demand Response/Dial-A-Ride Services

Dial-a-Ride is door-to-door rides for people who can't use regular buses because of disabilities, age, or other reasons. You usually need to book these rides ahead of time, and they may only be available in certain areas.

## Paratransit Services

Paratransit is transportation for people with disabilities who can’t use regular buses because of their condition. This also applies if the disability makes it hard to get to or from a bus stop. To use Paratransit services:

- The service must operate within 3/4 of a mile of a bus route.
- It runs during the same hours and days as regular buses.
- The fare can’t be more than twice the regular bus fare.
- Riders can schedule a ride for any time the day before. Rides should be provided within an hour of the requested time.

## Locations and Contact Information

| City | Transit Agency Name | Service Type | Destinations | Phone | Email |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ekalaka | Carter County Carter Charter | Dial-A-Ride | Miles City | 406-775-8751 | ccsencit@midrivers.com |
| Scobey | Daniels County Transportation | Dial-A-Ride | Glasgow, Poplar, Williston, ND | 406-228-8744 | vctransit@valleycountymt.gov |
| Glendive | Dawson County Urban Transportation | Dial-A-Ride | Dawson County Transit District | 406-377-1364 | dawsonut@midrivers.com |
| Baker | Fallon County Council on Aging | Dial-A-Ride | Miles City | 406-778-3595 | brownc@falloncounty.net |
| Malta | Phillips Transit Authority | Dial-A-Ride | Havre, Glasgow, and Billings | 406-654-5301 | phillipstransit@itstriangle.com |
| Broadus | Powder River County Transportation | Dial-A-Ride | Miles City and Billings | 406-436-2243 | KRoberts@prco.mt.gov |
| Sidney | Richland County Transportation | Dial-A-Ride | Sidney | 406-433-7433 | jberry@richland.org |
| Poplar | Fort Peck Transportation System | Dial-A-Ride | Glasgow, and Williston ND | 406-768-3909 | hheaddress@fortpecktribes.net |
| Plentywood | Quality Transit | Dial-A-Ride | Williston, ND | 406-765-1460 | glenwood1@nemont.net |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Glasgow | Valley County Transit | Dial-A-Ride | Glasgow | 406-228-8744 | vctransit@valleycountymt.gov |
| Lame Deer | Northern Cheyenne Transit Program | Dial-A-Ride | Northern Cheyenne | 406-477-8979 | Lynette.bighead@cheyennenation.com |
| Jordan | Big Dry Transit | Dial-A-Ride | Billings and Miles City | 406-852-4101 | athomas@garfieldco.us |

**For individuals in Custer County:** Custer County Transit gives rides within 2 miles of downtown Miles City, anywhere else in Custer County (if booked at least 3 days ahead), and to Billings two days a week. The Billings days change weekly, so check their schedule online. Learn more at www.custercountytransit.com.

## Disability Rights Montana

Disability Rights Montana is an organization that helps protect the rights of people with disabilities in Montana. They make sure people with disabilities have the same opportunities and protections as everyone else. Here's what they do:

1. **Advocacy**: They stand up for people with disabilities and push for laws and policies that make life easier and fairer for them.
2. **Legal Help**: If someone with a disability faces discrimination or problems in areas like work, school, or housing, Disability Rights Montana provides legal help.
3. **Access to Services**: They assist people with disabilities in getting the services they need, like healthcare, transportation, and education.
4. **Education**: They teach people with disabilities and their families about their rights and the services available to them.
5. **Improving Systems**: They work to change rules and systems that make life harder for people with disabilities, aiming to make things better for everyone in Montana.

Their goal is to ensure that people with disabilities are treated fairly, have equal opportunities, and can fully participate in their communities.

**Contact Information**
Website: https://disabilityrightsmt.org/
Email: info@DisabilityRightsMT.org
Phone (Voice/TDD): (406) 449-2344
Phone (Toll-free): (800) 245-4743

# Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center

The Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center is a place that offers mental health services and substance abuse and dependency services. They focus on making care affordable and easy to access, helping people of all ages, including those with low income or no insurance.

## Services at Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center

- Mental health and chemical dependency assessments, therapy (individual, group, family).
- Mental health assessment, treatment, and rehabilitation for veterans.
- Psychiatric care and medication management for adults and children.
- In-home, school, and community mental health support for adults and youth.
- Peer-led support for mental health, substance abuse, and trauma, based on shared experiences.
- Walk-in crisis services during business hours.
- 24/7 mobile crisis support across multiple counties, in partnership with law enforcement and 988 services.
- Group homes for adults who are on/eligible for the Severe and Debilitating Mental Illness Waiver

**Locations and Contact Information**
Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Center has locations in every county of eastern Montana. For a list of services available in each county, and clinic contact information, visit this section of their website: https://www.emcmhc.com/locations/

If you are unsure where to go or have general questions, you can call the main center in Miles City.

Address: 2508 Wilson, Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: (406)234-1687
Fax: (406)234-1698

## Family Health Information Center

If you need more help with the application process for the Developmental Disabilities Program and waivers, you can contact the **Montana Family to Family Health Information Center** for support. The Montana Family to Family Health Information Center helps families of children with disabilities by providing information and support. They offer guidance on health care, services, and programs available in Montana. They also help families understand how to access services like Medicaid, the Developmental Disabilities Program, and other resources. Their goal is to make it easier for families to find the support they need and navigate the systems that can sometimes be confusing.

- Phone: (406) 243-4570
- Email: montanaf2f@umontana.edu
- Website: https://www.umt.edu/family-to-family/

## Food Banks and Pantries

A food bank or food pantry is a place that provides free food to people who are struggling to get enough to eat. People can go there to get groceries like canned goods, bread, and fresh produce to help them get by. These services are often run by charities or community organizations to support those in need.

**Contact Information and Locations**

## Carter County Food Bank

Address: 214 Park St.
Ekalaka, MT 59324
Phone: 406-775-8571

## Custer County Food Bank

Address: 15 North 8th Street
Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: 406-234-3663

## Dawson County Food Bank

Address: 112 W. Benham
Glendive, MT 59330
Phone: 406-941-0202

## Dawson County School Pantry

Address: 900 N Merrill Ave
Glendive, MT 59350
Phone: 406-377-5265

## Fellowship Food Pantry

Address: 2181 W Holly St
Sidney, MT 59270
Phone: (406) 433-4004

## Malta Food Bank

Address: 110 S 1st St W
Malta, MT 59538
Phone: (406) 654-1235

## Sheridan County Food Bank

Address: 113 South Jackson
Plentywood, MT 59254
Phone: 406-765-2040

### St. Labre Food Pantry

Address: 1000 Tongue River Road
Ashland, MT 59003
Phone: 406-784-4500

### Valley County Emergency Food Bank

Address: 1020 1st Ave N
Glasgow, MT 59230
Phone: (406) 263-0605

### Wibaux County Food Bank

Address: 203 1st Ave SW
Wibaux, MT 59353
Phone: 406-796-2645

### Wolf Point School Pantry

Address: 400 Fallon St.
Wolf Point, MT 59201
Phone: 406-653-1200

## Helen Keller National Center

The Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) is the only national program that helps young adults and adults with combined vision and hearing loss (deafblindness) to live and work in their communities. They offer specialized training and support to help people achieve their goals.

## Youth Programs

HKNC offers several Youth Programs focused on college and career options for young adults, ages 16-24. These programs are held at their headquarters in Sands Point, New York:

- **Summer Youth Vocational Program (SYVP):** Helps participants find jobs, create resumes, and develop work readiness skills.
- **M~POWER:** Helps participants explore job options, learn job skills, and apply for college.

- **College Bound Program:** Prepares youth for college by focusing on independent living skills and classroom accommodations.
- **Braille Adventure program:** Helps young adults enhance their braille skills.
- **Summer Assessment Program:** Helps participants explore career and college options and develop an action plan for their future.
- **STEAM Pathways:** Helps students explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) and build Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) skills.

## How to Connect

Your HKNC Regional Representative knows all about the state-wide and national programs and services that are available to individuals with deafblindness, and their families. Contact them to learn more about support services near you, assistive technology available through the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, or how to explore the possibility of training in one of their youth programs.

Helen Keller National Center Youth Programs Website:
https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/youth-programs/

Regional Representative Contact Information:
Kirsten Hille
Phone/Text: (516) 479-4822
Video Phone: (541) 897-2289
Email: khille@helenkeller.org

## Homeword Organization

Homeword is a nonprofit that helps people find and keep affordable, safe, and eco-friendly homes. Here's what they do:

- **Affordable Housing:** They build and manage quality rental homes that are energy-efficient and long-lasting. **They have properties available in Malta.**

- **Homebuyer Classes:** They teach people how to buy a home, including picking a lender, understanding inspections, and weighing the pros and cons of owning a home.
- **Money Management Help:** They offer free classes to help people budget, build credit, and handle financial changes.
- **Counseling:** They provide one-on-one advice for buying a home, avoiding foreclosure, and reaching financial goals.

**Main Office Location and Contact Information**
Website: https://homeword.org/
Email: info@homeword.org
Address: 1535 Liberty Lane, Suite 116A
Missoula, MT 59808
Phone: 406-532-4663
Fax: 406-541-0239

# Housing Authorities

Housing authorities are government agencies that help people find affordable places to live. They manage public housing and provide rental assistance programs like Section 8, which helps pay part of the rent for low-income families. They also set affordable rent prices, process housing applications, and work on improving communities. Their goal is to make sure everyone has a safe and affordable home.

**Locations and Contact Information**

## Dawson County Housing Authority

Address: 200 California Street
Glendive, MT 59330
Phone: 406-377-3564

## Fort Peck Housing Authority (for members of the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes of Fort Peck)

Address: 503 6th Ave E
Poplar, MT 59255
Phone: (406) 768-3459

### Housing Authority of Glasgow

Address: 435 Division Street,
Glasgow, Montana 59230, United States
Phone: (406) 228-4942
Website: https://housingauthorityofglasgow.com/

### Miles City Housing Authority

Address: 2007 Clark Street
Miles City, Montana, 59301
Phone: (406) 234-3433

### Northern Cheyenne Tribal Housing Authority (for eligible tribal families living on the Northern Cheyenne reservation)

Address: 822 North Cheyenne Avenue
Lame Deer, MT 59043
Phone:(406) 477-6419
Website: https://nctha.com/

### Richland County Housing Authority

Address: 1032 6th Street Sw
Sidney, MT 59270
Phone: (406) 433-1978

## Indian Health Service

**Indian Health Service (IHS)** in Montana gives free healthcare to Native Americans and Alaska Natives. They provide:

- **Doctor Visits**: Checkups, help with sickness, and care for long-term issues like diabetes.
- **Medicine**: Prescriptions and advice on how to take them.
- **Dental Care**: Teeth cleaning, checkups, and fixing dental problems.
- **Mental Health**: Counseling and support for issues like depression or addiction.
- **Hospital Care**: Some clinics handle emergencies or send patients to nearby hospitals for serious care.

- **Care for Women and Children**: Help for pregnant women, baby checkups, and family health.
- **Health Tips**: Advice on eating healthy and avoiding sickness.

These services are free for members of recognized tribes. IHS clinics are in places like Billings, Browning, and Crow Agency, and they work with local tribes to meet community needs.

**Clinic Locations and Contact Information**

### Crow/Northern Cheyenne Hospital
Address: 420 North Cheyenne Avenue
Crow Agency, Montana 59022
Phone: (406) 638-3500

### Northern Cheyenne Service Unit
Address: 420 North Cheyenne Avenue
Lame Deer, Montana 59043
Phone: (406) 477-4400

### Verne E. Gibbs Health Center
Address: 107 H St,
Poplar, MT 59255
Phone: (406) 768-3491

### White Buffalo Clinic
Address: 805 Assiniboine Ave,
Poplar, MT 59255
Phone: (406) 768-3491

### Chief Redstone Health Clinic
Address: 550 6th Avenue North
Wolf Point, MT 59201
Phone: (406) 653-1641
Indian Health Service Website:
https://www.ihs.gov/billings/healthcarefacilities/

# Job Service Centers

**Job Service Centers** help people find jobs and assist businesses with hiring. Here's how they work:

- They post job openings and help you apply.
- Offer help with writing resumes, preparing for interviews, and improving job skills.
- Provide training programs to eligible job seekers to learn new skills or switch careers.
- Assist with filing for unemployment benefits if you've lost your job.

The services are free and available to anyone. You can visit a center in person or use their website to access job postings and resources. They aim to connect job seekers with opportunities and support Montana's economy.

**Center Locations and Contact Information**

## Wolf Point Job Service

Address: 201 Main Street
Wolf Point, MT 59201
Phone: (406) 653-1720
Fax: (406) 653-1196
Email: WolfPointJSC@mt.gov

## Sidney Job Service

Address: 211 North Central
Sidney, MT 59270
Phone: (406) 433-1204
Fax: (406) 433-7453
Email: SidneyJS@mt.gov

## Glendive Job Service

Address: 211 South Kendrick Ave.
Glendive, MT 59330

Phone: (406) 377-3314
Fax: (406) 377-5831
Email: GlendiveJSC@mt.gov

### Miles City Job Service

Address: 12 North 10th Street
Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: (406) 232-8340
Fax: (406) 232-6270
Email: MilesCityJSC@mt.gov

### Lame Deer Job Service

Address: 25 W Dog Soldier St
Lame Deer, MT 59043
Phone: (406) 477-6611
Fax: (406) 677-6050
Email: lamedeerjsc@mt.gov

## Montana Center for Inclusive Education

The Montana Center for Inclusive Education (MCIE) helps people with disabilities and different learning needs succeed in school, work, and community life. Based at Montana State University Billings, the center provides support, resources, and programs for students, teachers, and the community.

### What They Do:

- **Training for Teachers and Professionals:**
  MCIE offers workshops and events to teach inclusive practices, how to use assistive technology, and raise disability awareness.
- **Support for People with Disabilities:**
  They help students move from high school to college or jobs and connect people to resources for education or workplace accommodations.

- **Technology Help:**
  MCIE provides tools and training on assistive devices and software to make learning and work easier.
- **Partnering with Schools and Businesses:**
  They work with schools and companies to create inclusive and welcoming spaces.
- **Community Events:**
  The center runs programs to promote understanding and acceptance of diversity in the community.

Other Important Services They Offer:

- **Movin' On in Montana**: High school students with disabilities prepare for college. Students are paired with mentors who also have disabilities for monthly online meetings and seminars to guide them through the college transition. There is also a free four-day, on-campus experience where students live in dorms, eat in the cafeteria, attend classes, and visit other colleges to get a feel for college life.
- **Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)** program: helps people on Social Security Disability understand how working may affect their benefits. Available in Montana, Idaho, North Dakota, and South Dakota, WIPA offers free counseling on benefits, work incentives, and career planning to support employment and independence.

**Contact Information and Location**

Main Website:
https://www.msubillings.edu/montanacenter/

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project:
https://www.msubillings.edu/socialsecurity/

Movin' On in Montana:
https://www.msubillings.edu/montanacenter/movin-on.htm

Montana Center for Inclusive Education Montana State Address: University Billings 1500 University Drive
Billings, MT 59101
Phone: 406-657-2312
Toll-free: 1-888-866-3822

## The Montana DeafBlind Project

**Deafblindness** means having both vision and hearing loss, which can make it harder to communicate, learn, and get information. It's also called "dual sensory loss." Most people with deafblindness still have some usable hearing or vision.

**The Montana DeafBlind Project** helps families, teachers, and caregivers find the information and resources they need to support the learning and development of children with deafblindness, from birth to age 21.

Website: mtdeafblind.org
Phone: (800) 732-0323
Email: MTDeafBlind@mso.umt.edu

## Montana Fair Housing Organization

Montana Fair Housing helps people make sure everyone has a fair chance to find a place to live. Here's what they do:

- **Stop Discrimination**: They help if someone is treated unfairly when renting or buying a home because of things like race, gender, disability, or family status.
- **Education**: They teach people about housing rights and responsibilities.
- **Help with Complaints**: They assist people in solving problems or filing complaints if they face unfair treatment.
- **Advocate for Fairness**: They work to create better housing opportunities for everyone.

If you feel treated unfairly in housing or have questions about your rights, they can help.

**Contact Information**

Website: https://montanafairhousing.org/
Address: 501 East Front Street #533
Butte, MT 59701
Phone: 1-406-782-2573
Toll-free Phone: 1-800-929-2611

## The Montana School for the Deaf and The Blind

**The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB)** offers learning and growth opportunities for children from birth to age 21 who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, have vision loss, or are deafblind. These programs help prepare students for a successful and independent future.

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind's **Outreach Program** is a resource for the whole state, offering information, advice, and training to families, schools, and professionals who work with students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, have vision loss, or are deafblind. Consultants also provide technical help and lend equipment to schools for short-term use. These services are free for families and schools.

**Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach Consultants in Your Area**

**Shawn Erickson**
Phone: 406-471-0225
Email: serickson@msdb.k12.mt.us
Counties served: Choteau, Hill, Blaine, Phillips, Valley, Mccone, Daniels, Roosevelt, Richland, Sheridan, Upper half of Garfield and Dawson

**Susan Davis**
Phone: 406-670-3569
Email: sdavis@msdb.k12.mt.us
Counties served: Judith Basin, Fergus, Petroleum, Lower half of Garfield and Dawson, Prairie, Wibaux, Wheatland, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Northeast Corner of Yellowstone (including Billings Heights), Big Horn, Treasure, Rosebud, Custer, Fallon, Powder River and Carter

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach Consultants in Your Area**

**Emily LaSalle**
Phone: 406-461-1294
Email: elasalle@msdb.k12.mt.us
Counties served: Petroleum, Phillips, Garfield, Valley, Daniels, Sheridan, Roosevelt, Mccone, Richland, Dawson, Prairie, Wibaux, Fallon

**Amy Tangen**
Phone: 406-868-0851
Email: atangen@msdb.k12.mt.us
Counties served: Fergus, Musselshell, Rosebud, Custer, Carter, Powder River, Treasure, Big Horn, Carbon, Lockwood Schools and Billings Public Schools:  Senior and West High Schools

For a list of the blind and visually impaired services they offer, go to page 2:

https://www.msdbmustangs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/VI-Outreach.pdf

For a list of the deaf and hard of hearing services they offer, go to page 2: https://www.msdbmustangs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/DHH-Outreach.pdf

## Northeast Montana Health Service

Northeast Montana Health Services (NEMHS) provides healthcare for people in Roosevelt County. Their goal is to give good, affordable care to help the community stay healthy. The Northeast Montana Health Service has financial aid, accepts many insurance plans and works with providers to handle claims. They also offer financial assistance programs like sliding fee scales and payment plans.

Services they can provide:

- **Emergency Care:** Fast care for serious medical problems.
- **Primary Care:** Regular doctor visits and treatment for everyday health issues.

- **Maternity Services:** Care during pregnancy, childbirth, and after the baby is born, including ultrasounds.
- **Surgery:** Medical operations to treat injuries or illnesses.
- **Radiology:** Tests like x-rays and scans to see inside the body.
- **Laboratory Services:** Blood tests and other health checks.
- **Long-Term Care:** Ongoing help for people who need regular medical support.

**Locations and Contact Information**

Website: https://www.nemhs.net/
Listerud Rural Health Clinic
Address: 301 Knapp St.
Wolf Point, MT 59201
Phone: (406) 653-2150

**Poplar Community Hospital**
Address: 211 H Street East
Poplar, MT 59255
Phone: (406) 768-6100

**Riverside Family Clinic**
Address: 209 ½ H Street East
Poplar, MT 59255
Phone: (406) 768-5171

**Trinity Hospital**
Address: 315 Knapp St.
Wolf Point, MT 59201
Phone: (406) 653-6500

# Offices of Public Assistance

Offices of Public Assistance help people access government programs and services to meet basic needs. They assist with things like applying for **food assistance (SNAP)**, **healthcare coverage (Medicaid)**, **cash benefits (TANF)**, and other support programs. These offices guide individuals and families through the application process and help them understand what benefits they qualify for.

Each government program has its own rules to qualify. You can use this online tool to see which programs you may qualify for:
https://apply.mt.gov/access/accessController?id=1989512884

You can apply for the programs online:
https://apply.mt.gov/access/accessController?id=-2083228722

If you have questions while filling out the application, you can call the Office of Public Assistance Helpline: **1-888-706-1535**

You can also visit your closest Office of Public Assistance to apply in person, ask questions about the application, or see which programs you may be eligible to get.

**Offices of Public Assistance in Your Area**

**Glasgow Field Office**
Address: 630 2nd Avenue South, Suite C
Glasgow MT 59230
Email: hhshcsopavalley@mt.gov

**Lame Deer Field Office**
Address: 228 Montana Avenue
Lame Deer MT 59043
Email: hhshcsopalamedeer@mt.gov

**Miles City Field Office**
Address: 219 North Merriam Avenue
Miles City MT 59301-2700

Email: hhshcsopacuster@mt.gov

**Wolf Point Field Office**
Address: 131 Front Suite B
Wolf Point MT 59201
Email: hhshcsoparoosevelt@mt.gov

## One Health Care Centers

One Health offers medical, behavioral health, dental, pharmacy, substance use treatment, community outreach, education, and obstetrics services. One Health clinics get funding from a federal program that supports community health centers. Federally funded health centers like One Health, provide affordable services, especially for people with low incomes or limited access to healthcare.

**One Health Care Center Locations and Contact Information**
Website: https://www.onechc.org/

**Miles City Dental Clinic**
Address: 2811 Comstock Street
Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: 406.874.8711

**Miles City WIC/Public Health**
Address: 2811 Comstock Street
Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: 406.851.5050

**Miles City Clinic and Pharmacy**
Address: 305 South 4th Street
Miles City, MT 59301
Phone: 406.874.8700

**Glendive Clinic**
Address: 1515 W Bell St E
Glendive, MT 59330
Phone: 406.815.5831

## Montana Empowerment Center (Parent Training and Information Center)

Montana Empowerment Center is Montana's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), here to support families of children with disabilities from birth through age 26.

We believe parents know their children best—and we're here to help you feel confident, informed, and ready to be an active part of your child's education.

Our team provides free and confidential one-on-one support, easy-to-understand information, and practical tools so you can work well with schools and service providers to meet your child's needs.

We also offer workshops and trainings to help families understand special education, learn what works best for their child, and become strong partners in making schools better for everyone.

For youth with disabilities, we provide support to build self-advocacy skills—like learning how to speak up, make decisions, and plan for the future. Whether it's help with special education, IEPs, or life after high school, we're here to walk alongside you and your child.

You're not alone on this journey. Montana Empowerment Center is here to help you every step of the way.

Free trainings and tips on special education, early intervention and transitioning to adult life are available on their website:

https://mtempowermentcenter.org/

Phone: 877-870-1190

# Pre-Employment Transition Services

**Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)** is a program that helps students with disabilities ages 14-21 get ready for work or college after high school. **Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services (VRBS)** works with schools and a variety of providers to offer these services. Students also receive Pre-ETS services directly from the Pre-ET Specialists.

Pre-Employment Transition Services can help students with:

- **Finding the right job:** They help students figure out what kind of jobs they might like and if they're a good fit.
- **Trying out jobs:** Students can do things like shadow people at work or get work experience.
- **Deciding about college:** They help students learn about college and decide if it's a good option. If they do choose college, they help with things like applying, getting financial aid, and finding support services.
- **Learning job skills:** They teach students how to apply for jobs, act professionally, and be responsible employees.
- **Learning to advocate for themselves:** They teach students how to ask for what they need and be independent.

## Eligibility for Pre-Employment Transition Services

Students are eligible for Pre-ETS if they meet the following criteria:

- A student with a disability
- Between 14-21 years of age
- In high school, college, or another recognized education program

## How to Get Pre-Employment Transition Services

To apply, students can ask their teacher or family to help schedule an appointment with the VRBS Pre-ETS Specialist or the Vocational Rehabilitation Office that is in their area (see contact list for offices below).

### Action Steps for Educators: How to Apply for a Pre-ETS Contract

A contract with VRBS allows you to offer more services to your students than you might already have. This could include things like:

- New programs or classes to help students explore careers.
- More opportunities for students to try out jobs through job shadowing or internships.
- Resources to help students apply to college and get financial aid.
- Training for teachers and staff on how to help students with disabilities prepare for work and independence.

If you are interested in offering these services at your school: contact the Pre-Employment Transition Specialist in your area and set up a time to discuss your school's needs and transition plans.

For resources on types of Pre-ETS activities you can do at your school, check out this website from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services: https://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/preets/Educators

**Pre- Employment Transition Specialists by County**

**Specialist: Belinda Battin**
Address: 114 N 7th Street
Miles City MT 59301
Phone: 406-232-0583
Fax: 406-232-0885
Email: Belinda.Battin@mt.gov
Counties Served: Garfield, Mccone, Richland, Dawson, Prairie, Wibaux, Rosebud, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, Carter

**Specialist: Rebekah Sirrine, M.R.C**
Address: 48 2nd Ave. Ste. 213
Havre MT 59501
Cell Phone: 406-202-5296
Office Phone: **406-265-6933**
Fax: 406-265-9271

Email: rebekah.sirrine@mt.gov
Counties Served: Phillips, Valley, Daniels, Roosevelt, Sheridan

**Specialist: Lona Forman**
Address: 2121 Rosebud Dr, Ste C
Billings, MT 59102
Phone: **406-248-4801 (voice/TTY)**
**888-279-7532 (toll-free)**
Fax: 406-652-1781
Email: Lona.Forman1@mt.gov
Counties served: Big Horn, Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland, Yellowstone, Treasure

## Richland County Coalition Against Domestic Violence

The Richland County Coalition Against Domestic Violence in Sidney, Montana, helps people who are experiencing domestic violence. They offer:

1. **Help for Survivors:** They support people who are dealing with abuse, offering advice and resources to keep them safe.
2. **Emergency Help:** They assist with finding safe places to stay, creating safety plans, and handling crisis situations.
3. **Legal Help:** They guide people through the legal process, like getting restraining orders or understanding their rights.
4. **Education:** They teach the community about domestic violence, how to spot it, and how to stop it.
5. **Connections to Services:** They help people find other resources, like counseling, medical care, or financial aid.
6. **Working Together:** They team up with local groups, police, and others to improve support and prevent domestic violence.

**Contact Information**
Address: 1401 9th Ave SW, Sidney MT
Business Line: **406-433-7241**
Hotline/Crisis Line (call anytime): **406-973-1635**

# Rural Development Program

USDA's Rural Development Program in Montana helps families in small towns and rural areas by:

1. **Housing Help:** Offering loans and grants to buy, build, or fix homes.
2. **Affordable Rentals:** Supporting low-cost housing for families and seniors.
3. **Community Projects:** Helping build schools, clinics, and fire stations.
4. **Utilities:** Bringing clean water, electricity, and internet to rural areas.
5. Business Support: Helping small businesses and farms grow to create jobs.

They make rural life better with safe housing, essential services, and stronger communities.

**Office Locations and Contact Information**
Main Website: https://www.rd.usda.gov/mt

**Billings Area Office**
Address: 1400 S. 24th Street W., Suite 8
Billings, MT 59102
Phone: (406) 657-6297 ext. 4
Fax2Mail: (855) 576-2671
Counties served: Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Musselshell, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley, Wibaux, and Crow, Fort Peck and Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservations

**Great Falls Area Office**
Address: 12 3rd Street NW, Suite 300
Great Falls, MT 59404

Phone: (406) 727-7580 ext. 4
Fax2Mail: (866) 574-1071

Counties served: Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, Hill, Judith Basin, Liberty, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Teton, Toole, and Fort Belknap and Rocky Boy's Indian Reservations

## Montana Transition and Employment Projects

Montana Transition and Employment Projects help young people with disabilities get ready for adult life. They provide easy-to-use tools such as fact sheets, newsletters, and guides on topics like employment, health care transition, and alternatives to guardianship.

The projects also offer workbooks for students and families, toolkits for teachers and agencies, and step-by-step resources to help with Social Security and work incentives. In addition, they highlight stories of Montana youth leaders, award small community grants, and create training materials that can be used in schools, at home, or by service providers.

Anyone looking for resources on postsecondary transition for youth with disabilities can connect with Montana Transition and Employment Projects. Visit the website at: https://transition.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/

**Contact Information**
Phone: (406) 243-4134
Email: ellen.condon@mso.umt.edu

## Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation

Montana offers **Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR)** programs for Native Americans, who can choose to work with both TVR and the state **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** program. TVR mainly supports Native Americans living on or near reservations and collaborates with state VR programs to provide complete assistance.

TVR programs address the cultural and financial needs of Native communities while offering services like job support, education, and training for people with disabilities.

## Eligibility Requirements and the Application Process

The basic requirements to get Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Services are:

- You must be an enrolled member of the tribe.
- You need to have a physical or mental disability that makes it hard for you to get a job.
- You need to be ready to work with the program to get training, education, or other help that can lead to a job.

It is important to note that each Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program in our state is a little different. They each have their own rules for who can get services, their own goals, and their own application process. Each program also offers services that are a good fit for the culture of their specific tribe.

To find out how to apply for services, it's a good idea to contact the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation office in your area. They can explain the steps you need to take to enroll in their program and answer any questions you have about the process.

**Contact Information and Office Locations**

**Blackfeet Tribe Vocational Rehabilitation**
Director:  Roberta Gordon, Acting
Deputy Director: Christy Horn
Administrator: Joleen Weatherwax
Address: PO Box 1090/409 N. Piegan St., Browning, MT  59417-1090
Office Phone: (406) 338-2111
Office Cell: (406) 845-33426
Email: jweatherwax@blackfeetnation.com

**Fort Belknap Tribes**
Director:  Annette Horn
Address:  RR1, Box 66, Harlem, MT  59526
Phone: (406) 353-2205 ext. 410
Email: Annette.horn@ftbelknap.org

**Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes**
Director:  Carmelita Matt
Address:  PO Box 278, Pablo, MT  59855
Phone: (406) 675-2700 ext. 1150
Email: carmelita.matt@cskt.org

**Fort Peck Tribes**
Director: Wilfred "Max" Bear
Address: PO Box 1027, Poplar, MT  59255
Phone: (406) 768-2451
Email: asvrp@nemont.net

**Chippewa Cree Tribe**
Director:  Tracy Caplette
Address:  31 Agency Square, Box Elder, MT  59521
Phone: (406) 395-5739

**Northern Cheyenne Tribe**
Director: Steve Small
Address: PO Box 98, Lame Deer, MT  59043
Phone: (406) 477-3641
Email: ssmall@cdkc.edu

# TRIO Educational Opportunity Centers

TRIO Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) offer free services to students and/or community members 16 years or older. Its goal is to support 850 people each year in pursuing higher education. To qualify, you must live in or attend college in one of 19 Montana counties or two tribal nations that EOC serves and not attend a school with a Talent Search program. The services they can provide are:

## Career Guidance

- Help exploring career options that match your interests.
- Discover job opportunities and internships.
- Get support with resumes, CVs, and training programs.
- Tailored advice to meet your unique needs.

## Financial Coaching

- Learn how to budget, manage debt, and improve your credit.
- Get help paying for college or trade school, including FAFSA and scholarships.
- Personalized financial advice for your situation.

## Personal & Academic Assistance

- Get connected to local resources and support.
- Help with applying to schools, jobs, or training programs.
- Build academic skills, prep for tests, and improve time management.
- Guidance for earning a GED or HiSET diploma.

**Counties in Region 1 Served by TRIO EOCs**: Custer, Carter, Dawson, Fallon, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Treasure, Wibaux

**Contact Information**
Website: https://www.msubillings.edu/trio/eoc/index.htm
Email: eoc@msubillings.edu
Phone: (406) 657-2162
Fax: (406) 657-1667

## Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services

In Montana, there's a program called **VRBS (Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services)** that helps people with disabilities find and keep jobs. They work with each person to figure out what they're good at and help them find jobs that match their skills. VRBS also offers training and support to help people improve their job skills.

You are eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services if you meet all three of the following criteria:

1. You have a physical or mental disability
2. Your disability prevents you from getting or keeping a job
3. You want to work and you need VRBS services to help you get or keep a job.

You are presumed eligible if you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or SSDI benefits.

Once eligible these are the types of services VRBS can provide based on what you need to prepare for a career, get into that career and maintain employment on your career path. Services MAY include some of the following:

- **Evaluation Services** – Interest surveys, career information websites, and other evaluations may be used to help you learn more about yourself, unique skills, abilities and interests as well as your needs related to your disability.
- **Career Counseling and Guidance Services** – Learn about the world of work and careers. In conjunction with information about you and your choices, you and your VRBS counselor will develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) outlining the services you need for your career path.
- **Medical or Psychological Services** – These services may be available on a limited basis should you need them to get and keep going on your career path.

- **Training** – Vocational Rehabilitation may coordinate and help fund such services as on-the-job training, job coaching, business/trade school, college or other vocational programs if you need them for your career.
- **Job Development and Placement Services** – Vocational Rehabilitation will provide assistance to help you with your job search. Assistance may include helping to complete a job application and help to prepare for a job interview.
- **Rehabilitation Technology** – You and your counselor may identify and obtain adaptive aids or equipment necessary to help you get or keep a job. For example, computer adaptations, workstations, modifications, etc.
- **Post Employment Services** – Once you are employed, support services related to your disability may be provided to help you keep your job.
- **Referrals** – Vocational Rehabilitation can coordinate with other programs and services to increase your opportunities for employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation also has special **services for people who are blind or have low vision.** These services offer the same kinds of training and support as Vocational Rehabilitation for people with disabilities, but they also have services that are only for people who are blind or have low vision who want to find and keep jobs. Some examples are training on how to get around (orientation and mobility) and learning braille.

To qualify for Blind and Low Vision Services, the person must have a vision problem that affects daily activities and work, such as being legally blind (vision of 20/200 or worse with glasses or contacts) or having low vision (vision between 20/200 and 20/60 with glasses or contacts).

There's also a program called **Pre-Employment Transition Services** that helps students with disabilities get ready for work. This program is part of VRBS and helps students learn job skills and get prepared for the

workforce. Pre-Employment Transition Services are explained in a separate section.

## How to Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation Services

For more information about applying for services, contact the VRBS Counselor or Pre-ETS Specialist that serves your area. Find your nearest Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services office here: VRBS Offices by County) Contact information and office locations are also available at the end of this section.

## Important Note for Educators/Non-Family Members

You will need parental or guardian consent to refer a student under 18 to Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services (VRBS) in Montana. This makes sure that you follow privacy laws and allows Vocational Rehabilitation Services to get the information they need to assist the student. Parents/Guardians can be given the form to “Invite [an] Outside Agency” at an IEP meeting. An example of the form from Montana’s Office of Public Instruction, is available here: Consent to Invite Outside Agency.

**Contact Information and Office Locations**

**Pre- Employment Transition Services Offices**
Specialist: Belinda Battin
Address: 114 N 7th Street
Miles City MT  59301
Phone: 406-232-0583
Fax: 406-232-0885
Email: Belinda.Battin@mt.gov
Counties Served: Garfield, Mccone, Richland, Dawson, Prairie, Wibaux, Rosebud, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, Carter

**Specialist: Rebekah Sirrine, M.R.C**
Address: 48 2nd Ave. Ste. 213
Havre MT 59501
Cell Phone: 406-202-5296
Office Phone: **406-265-6933**

Fax: 406-265-9271
Email: rebekah.sirrine@mt.gov
Counties Served: Phillips, Valley, Daniels, Roosevelt, Sheridan

**Specialist: Lona Forman**
Address: 2121 Rosebud Dr, Ste C
Billings, MT 59102
Phone: **406-248-4801 (voice/TTY)**
**888-279-7532 (toll-free)**
Fax: 406-652-1781
Email: Lona.Forman1@mt.gov
Counties served: Big Horn, Carbon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland, Yellowstone, Treasure

**Pre-ETS Bureau Chief: Tammy Hogan, M.Ed., CRC,**
Address: 201 1st St S, Ste 2
Great Falls, MT 59405
Phone: 406-454-6069 (voice)
406-454-6080 (TTY)
888-279-7527 (toll-free)
Fax: 406-454-6084
Email: thogan@mt.gov
Vocational Rehabilitation & Blind and Low Vision Services Offices by County
Carter, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Wibaux:

**Vocational Rehabilitation**
114 N 7th St
Miles City, MT 59301
406-232-0583 (voice/TTY)
877-296-1198 (toll-free)
406-232-0885 (fax)

**Blind and Low Vision Services**
2121 Rosebud Drive, Suite C

Billings, MT 59102
(406) 248-4801 (V/TTY)
(888) 279-7532 (Toll Free)
(406) 652-1781 (Fax)

**Daniels, Phillips, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Valley:**

**Vocational Rehabilitation**
48 2nd Ave, Ste 213
Havre, MT 59501
406-265-6933 (voice)
877-296-1294 (toll-free)
406-265-9271 (fax)

**Blind and Low Vision Services**

201 1st Street South, Suite 2
Great Falls, MT 59405-1884
(406) 454-6060 (V)
(406) 454-6080 (TTY)
(888) 279-7527 (Toll Free)
(406) 454-6084 (Fax)

**McCone:**

**Vocational Rehabilitation**
114 N 7th St
Miles City, MT 59301
406-232-0583 (voice/TTY)
877-296-1198 (toll-free)
406-232-0885 (fax)

**Blind and Low Vision Services**

201 1st Street South, Suite 2
Great Falls, MT 59405-1884
(406) 454-6060 (V)

(406) 454-6080 (TTY)
(888) 279-7527 (Toll Free)
(406) 454-6084 (Fax)

**Rosebud:**

**Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind and Low Vision Services**

2121 Rosebud Drive, Suite C
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 248-4801 (V/TTY)
(888) 279-7532 (Toll Free)
(406) 652-1781 (Fax)

# Youth Dynamics

Youth Dynamics in Montana helps children, teens, and families with mental health and behavior challenges. Their goal is to support young people and help families stay strong. Here's what they do:

1. **Therapy**: They provide counseling for kids, teens, and families to help with emotions and behavior (including substance abuse).
2. **Help at Home**: They work with families in their homes to teach skills and provide support.
3. **Foster Care**: They find safe homes for kids who need them and support foster families.
4. **Care Coordination**: They help families get the services and resources they need.
5. **Group Homes**: They offer safe places for kids who need extra care and therapy.
6. **Community Education**: They teach people about mental health and how to support kids and families.

**Locations and Contact Information**

Website: https://www.youthdynamics.org/
Phillips County
46 S. 1st Street East Suite 14
(PO Box 197)
Malta, MT 59538
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## Timelines for Transition

- 6-14 years old
- 14-15 years old
- 15-17 years old
- 18-21 years old

## Transition Timeline for 6-14 years old

Note: If the student was not part of Early Intervention Services (Part C), speak with the Developmental Disabilities Program (DDP) office closest to you to see if the student would be eligible for the program/services. If found eligible, look into getting on the waitlist for the "Comprehensive 0208 Waiver" as soon as possible. You can find more information on DDP eligibility, waivers, and contact information for DDP offices in the Community Resources section of this binder.

- ❑ Prepare for the child's Individualized Education Plan by sharing evaluations, writing down their strengths/needs, and any goals they have shared with you or goals you have for them.

- ❑ Get the child involved in their IEP meetings; they could introduce themself and share about needs and goals with lists or pictures.

- ❑ Teach the child everyday skills they can use on their own, both at school and at home (Examples: sorting items, taking turns, cooking, doing laundry, money management)

- ❑ Support the child in joining fun activities that are right for their age (examples: team sports, playing music, dancing, painting, etc.).

- ❑ Introduce and encourage "self-advocacy skills"; have the child practice speaking up for themselves/asking for what they need.

- ❑ Consider opening up an ABLE account for your child to begin saving up for their future.

- ❑ If you have not already, consider applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for your child. SSI benefits and the application process are explained in this fact sheet from the Social Security Administration: https://www.ssa.gov/disability/Documents/Factsheet-CHLD.pdf

Suggested Resources: Your nearest Center for Independent Living has programs, workshops, and activities for youth with disabilities to practice skills like self-advocacy and socializing. Their contact information, along with information on ABLE Accounts is in the Community Resources section of this binder.

# Transition Timeline for 14-15 years old

- ❑ Schedule an appointment with the Pre-Employment Transition Specialist in your area. You can also request Vocational Rehabilitation Services for the child through this specialist as well. Contact information for them is in the Community Resources section of this binder.

- ❑ Meet with the Developmental Disabilities Case Manager (if the child is served by DDP) to talk about what supports may be available like therapy, family workshops, and other local resources.

- ❑ Find opportunities for the child to be out in the community, like volunteering, job shadowing, or extracurricular activities.

- ❑ Teach the child to take charge of their health care and continue this into their adulthood (examples: taking their medication on time, scheduling doctor's appointments, keeping track of their ID or health insurance card).

- ❑ The child has an active role on their IEP Team and understands the accommodations they need.

- ❑ Teach different transportation options to the child (bus systems, dial-a-ride, paratransit, bicycles, rideshare, driver's license, etc.)

- ❑ If the child gets Supplemental Security Income benefits or is eligible for them, they can open a PASS plan at age 15. More information on the PASS plan can be found here:

https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/documents/PASS_and_Ticket_Guide.pdf

- ❑ If you are considering leaving an inheritance or managing larger assets for your child, research Special Needs Trusts (SNTs) to protect their eligibility for public benefits

Suggestion: Your nearest Center for Independent Living has programs, workshops, and activities for youth with disabilities to practice independent living skills and learn their transportation options. You can find this information in the Community Resources section of the binder.

## Transition Timeline for 15-17 years old

- ❑ Keep a Transitions Documents file to store records like IEPs, evaluations, and progress reports.

- ❑ Meet with the IEP team to create transition goals for education, employment, and independent living after high school, as well as the services needed for the child to achieve them (in Montana, these goals must be in place by age 16).

- ❑ If the child is served by The Developmental Disabilities Program or qualifies, make sure that they have targeted case management in place, and are on any waiting lists for appropriate services.

- ❑ Sign up for Pre-Employment Transition Services/Vocational Rehabilitation if you have not already followed up with your local Pre-ETS Specialist.

- ❑ Look for jobs, training, or education programs after high school that fit the child's goals and strengths (examples: Job Corps, 4-year College, Community College, Inclusive Post-Secondary Education, Job Services).

- ❑ Request accommodations for the child if they are going to take the SAT/ACT.

- ❑ Start having talks with the child about where they would want to live after high school. Consider Housing and Urban Development or Section 8 housing (look into this early because there are waiting lists).

- ❑ If parents believe that their child will need continued support as an adult to make life decisions: look at options under "Alternatives to Guardianship" in the Transition Planning Resources section of this binder.

- ❑ Support the child in learning money management skills; your closest Center for Independent Living can help with this.

- ❑ Get the child a State ID or Driver's License.

- ❑ Explore adult medical providers if the child will need to move on from their pediatric doctor when they turn 18.

- ❑ Track the child's progress towards graduation: when they reach their senior year, the special education teacher will document if they graduate, return next year, or age out before meeting graduation requirements.

- ❑ If the child is getting Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, prepare for the redetermination that will happen at age 18: https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11005.pdf

Note: The student is legally considered an adult at the age of 18. All the rights that the parents/guardians had in their special education services will become the student's responsibility. This is why it is important to consider alternatives to guardianship before they turn 18.

## Transition Timeline for 18-21 years old

- ❑ Has the young adult applied for college, or will they start a new job? This short video on disability disclosure will help them understand why the choice to tell the school/workplace about their disability can be helpful: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMb5aURm81s

- ❑ Register to vote and Selective Service (if person meets the criteria) https://www.sss.gov/register/.

- ❑ Help the young adult apply for Supplemental Security Income– if they are able to get this then they will also automatically get Medicaid coverage too.

- ❑ If the young person gets Social Security benefits and are unable to manage them by themself, investigate "Representative Payee" options: https://www.ssa.gov/payee/

- ❑ Make sure the young adult is on the waiting list for the Developmental Disabilities (0208) Waiver, and that case management services are in place (if appropriate).

- ❑ Encourage the young adult to connect with the closest Center for Independent Living if this has not been done already. They can offer more guidance on employment, education, housing, and transportation.

- ❑ If the young person moves to adult healthcare providers at 18, keep a list of their current doctors, therapists, and specialists, and know what is available under their medical insurance.

- ❑ Apply for mental health services if appropriate, to make sure the young adult has the emotional support needed for this big transition.

- ❑ If the adult wants to live independently and is not on a waitlist for housing services: apply now. There is housing services listed in the Community Resources section of this binder, and Centers for Independent Living can also give more information on affordable housing options.

- ❑ Make sure the documents in your "Transitions File" are kept up to date.

## Transition Planning Resources

- IDEA and Postsecondary Transition
- Assessment
- Postsecondary Goals
- Course of Study
- Transition Services and Activities
- Corresponding IEP Goals
- Inviting Outside Agencies
- Indicator 13
- Graduation Requirements
- Summary of Performance
- Alternatives to Guardianship
- Transfer of Rights
- Procedural Safeguards

# IDEA and Postsecondary Transition

**IDEA** is a U.S. federal law that makes sure children with disabilities get the education they need. It guarantees that students with disabilities receive a **free and appropriate education (FAPE)** in the least restrictive setting possible, meaning they should be included with other students as much as they can. The law requires schools to provide special education and support services to help these students succeed in school and after graduation. States must follow the rules in IDEA to get federal money for special education programs.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act includes specific laws around **transition IEPs** for students with disabilities. These laws make sure that students are given the supports and services they need to prepare for life after high school, such as higher education, employment, and independent living. Here's a summary of the key requirements for transition planning under IDEA:

- The IEP needs to include plans for life after high school starting at age 16.
- The IEP must include specific, measurable goals about what the student wants to do after graduation, like going to college, getting a job, or living independently.
- The transition plan should focus on the student's strengths, needs, and interests, and help them work towards their future goals.
- The IEP must include the services, classes, and experiences the student needs to achieve their goals. This might include job training, life skills, or community activities.
- The student should be part of the planning process so that the goals match what they want for their future.
- The transition plan should be reviewed and updated every year to make sure it's still on track to help the student reach their goals.
- When the student finishes high school, they should receive a document that summarizes their academic abilities and functional performance and include what supports they might need after high school. This **Summary of Performance** is intended to assist future

services providers to help the student achieve their postsecondary goals.

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) makes sure that states and schools are providing the transition planning and supports (mentioned above). They use a **set of standards (Indicator 13)** which educators can use as a checklist to make sure that they are following the law.

# Assessment

### The Importance of Assessment in the Transition Plan

IDEA states that "beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills."

**Age-appropriate transition assessments** are used to find out what a student is good at, what they like, and what they need help with as they get ready to move from school to life after school, such as going to college, getting a job, living on their own, or being part of the community. These assessments are used for students with disabilities as part of their transition plan– results are used to develop the goals and measure progress towards them.

## Assessment Resources

### Transition Matrix

This Transition Matrix from Indiana University can be used to find age-appropriate transition assessments. You can check the boxes on the left to filter assessment options based on transition domain (employment, independent living, education/training), language, and grade level; there is also an option to filter results for students with high support needs.

**Examples of Transition Assessments**

The handout linked above is from the Montana Office of Public Instruction. It outlines age-appropriate transition assessments and provides links to free assessments in areas like independent living, self-determination, and career interest.

# Postsecondary Goals

Postsecondary goals in a student's transition IEP are plans for what the student wants to do after high school. These goals focus on the key areas of **education, training/employment, and independent living** (if appropriate). They guide the planning process and help prepare the student for life after high school. Special educators base these goals on the information gathered from age-appropriate assessments.

Good postsecondary goals are...

- **Student-Focused:** The goals reflect what the student wants to do after high school, based on their own preferences, strengths, and interests.
- **Clear and Observable:** Written in specific, concrete terms so it is clear what the student will be doing after high school.
- **Future Oriented:** Postsecondary goals must be written for after high school and describe outcomes that will occur after the student exits high school.
- **Realistic:** The goals are challenging but possible based on the results of transition assessment.
- **Collaborative:** Developed with input from the student, family, and IEP team to ensure they are practical and supported.

## Postsecondary Goals Resources

**OPI Measurable Postsecondary Goals**

This handout from Montana's Office of Public Instruction gives examples of measurable postsecondary goals in the three key areas.

**Examples of Postsecondary Goals**

Starting on page 2 of this handout, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction defines postsecondary goals. They also give 4 different IEP case examples of students with mild to complex disabilities, and their postsecondary goals.

## Course of Study

When writing a transition IEP (Individualized Education Plan), the **course of study** must include courses that align with the student's postsecondary goals. This is a plan for the classes and learning experiences the student will complete to prepare for life after high school. The course of study must be designed for the length of the IEP, including the current semester and the following two semesters, consisting of courses that focus both on academic skills and practical skills to help the student succeed after high school.

**Match The Course of Study to the Student's Goals**

- **If the student wants to go to college**, include classes that build foundational reading/writing, math, science, and social studies skills (e.g., critical thinking, and problem solving). This will support the student in meeting college entry requirements.
- **If the student wants a trade job**, like becoming a mechanic, include hands-on classes like auto shop or technical training.
- **If the student wants to be a chef**, include classes like cooking or consumer sciences.
- **If the student needs to build independence**, include life skills classes like budgeting, cooking, or using public transportation.

### Course of Study Resources

**OPI Course of Study** This handout from the Montana Office of Public Instruction gives more guidance on planning a student's course of study for the IEP.

**Transition Activities Mapping Tool** This mapping tool from Arkansas Transition Services can be used to connect IEP goals to possible classes where the transition activities could be provided.

**Transition IEP Examples.** The Parent Education and Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) provides four Transition IEP case examples of students with different ability levels. Course of study is under “Step 7” for each example.

# Transition Services and Activities

The IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) includes rules about **transition services** for students with disabilities. Transition services are supports and activities included in a student's IEP to help them prepare for life after high school. These services are directly linked to the student's postsecondary goals in education, training/employment, and independent living. The transition services provide practical steps, like job training, life skills development, and career counseling, to help the student achieve their future goals. While many transition services fall under the responsibility of the school to deliver, other agencies or the family of the student may also provide transition services/activities. Go to the **Inviting Outside Agencies** section of this binder for more information on this.

## Examples of Transition Services

**Transition Service/Activity in Instruction:** Dan will enroll in a career and technical education course in Computer Science.

**Person or Agency Responsible:** CTE Instructor, SPED Instructor, Dan, and his Parents

**Transition Service/Activity in Employment:** Layla will participate in job-shadowing at a dentist’s office through Pre-Employment Transition services.

**Person or Agency Responsible:** Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services, SPED Instructor, Layla, and her Parents

**Transition Service/Activity in Community Experiences:** Sam’s parents will take her to visit The University of Montana campus twice during the school year so that she can become familiar with the campus and meet with the Disability Services Support office.

Person or Agency Responsible: Sam and her Parents

**Transition Service/Activity in Post-School Living:** Fred will set up a bank account and learn how to access the money by the end of the school year.

**Person or Agency Responsible:** Sam, his Parents, SPED Instructor

**Transition Service/Activity in Daily Living Skills:** Paul will develop cooking skills by following steps to warm food up in the microwave, stovetop, and oven.

**Person or Agency Responsible:** Home Economics teacher, SPED Instructor, Parents, and Paul.

**Transition Service/Activity in Related Services:** Mabel will meet with an assistive technology specialist to learn about tools for organization and planning.

**Person or Agency Responsible:** MonTech Specialist, SPED Instructor, Mabel

**Transition Service/Activity in Vocational Assessments:** Dwayne will complete a study skills inventory by the end of the school year.

Person or Agency Responsible: Dwayne and SPED Instructor

## Transition Services Resources

### OPI Transition Services Needed

Montana's Office of Public Instruction has a handout that explains where and how to document transition services in the IEP.

### Examples of Transition Services Needed

The Utah State Board of Education has a list of transition services and activities organized by grade level and transition area (employment, education/training, independent living).

## Corresponding IEP Goals

In a student's transition IEP (Individualized Education Plan), the measurable **postsecondary goals** are directly connected to what the student wants to do after high school. These plans usually focus on three main areas: further education or training, getting a job, and, if needed, living independently.

The IEP also includes **clear, measurable annual goals (MAGs)** to help the student develop the skills or gain the experience they need to reach those postsecondary goals. Here's how these goals might matchup:

1. Postsecondary Goal (Education/Training): After high school, [student] will attend a community college to pursue a certificate in culinary arts.

**Aligned Measurable Annual Goal (MAG):** By the end of the school year, when given the template for a college application, [student] will independently complete the form with 100% accuracy, as measured by teacher observation and data.

2. Postsecondary Goal (Employment): After high school, [student] will work in a retail setting.

**Aligned Measurable Annual Goal (MAG):** By the end of the annual IEP period, given a position in a school-based job setting, [student] will demonstrate workplace readiness skills (e.g., following a schedule, responding appropriately to feedback) with at least 80% accuracy for 4 out of 5 consecutive opportunities, as measured by teacher observation and data collection.

3. Postsecondary Goal (Independent Living): After high school, [student] will live independently in an apartment and manage their personal finances.

**Aligned Measurable Annual Goal (MAG):** By the end of the school year, when given a projected income and list of expenses, [student] will create and follow a weekly budget with at least 90% accuracy for 8 out of 10

consecutive weeks, as measured by teacher observation and data collection.

## Inviting Outside Agencies

Involving outside agencies is a legal requirement in transition planning under IDEA, and it helps ensure students with disabilities have access to the full range of services they need to succeed after high school. These agencies can provide **transition services** like job training, help with college or independent living, and ongoing support for health and daily needs. They also guide families through legal, financial, and long-term planning. Early connection to agencies prevents gaps in services when the student moves from high school to adulthood.

### Examples of Agencies

**Vocational Rehabilitation and Pre-Employment Transition Services:** Many students with disabilities need job training, career counseling, or assistance finding employment. Montana's Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services can provide these services to help students.

**Centers for Independent Living:** These centers help students by teaching them how to use public transportation, develop self-advocacy skills, and find housing. They also provide mentoring programs and support groups to guide students as they transition to greater independence.

**Montana Job Services:** A job service representative can share information about job training, local work opportunities, and career resources. They can guide the student on building job skills, creating a resume, and preparing for interviews to support their transition to work.

**Transportation Agency:** A transportation agency representative can explain local bus or transit options and show the student how to use them. They can help plan routes and schedules so the student can travel independently to work, school, or other activities.

**Disability Support Services at Colleges and Universities:** A Disability and Support Services representative should attend the IEP meeting a year

or two before graduation to help the student understand how college support works, like getting accommodations, providing paperwork, and speaking up for themselves. If the student has a college in mind, the representative can share what that school offers. They can also explain how college support is different from high school to help the student get ready.

**Departments of Recreation:** A recreation department representative can share local activities and programs the student can join, like sports, hobbies, or community events. They can also help the student find programs that are inclusive or adapted to their needs, building skills and connections in the community.

**Assistive Technology Programs:** An assistive technology representative can find tools or devices that support the student in areas like school, work, or everyday tasks. They can recommend and teach the student how to use technology like special apps or equipment to help with communication, learning, or movement. They also make sure the student will have access to these tools after high school.

**The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program (WIOA):** A WIOA Program Specialist can provide the student with job training, career advice, and support. They can help the student find work experience, internships, and job opportunities, as well as teach them skills needed for work. The specialist also helps the student make a career plan and find resources for a successful move to a job.

**For more information on agencies with resources for families, and how to connect with them, visit the Community Resources Section of this binder.

## You Must Have Consent

The school must identify and invite agencies likely to assist with transition services, but they need written consent from the parent or adult student before doing so. A **consent form must be completed** each time an agency is invited to a meeting. If an agency cannot attend, the school must find other ways to involve them in planning. If an agency doesn't deliver

promised services, the school is responsible for finding alternatives, such as using other funding, referring to a different agency, or using community resources, and updating the IEP to reflect these changes.

The Office of Public Instruction has created **a handout for teachers** that gives more in-depth information on inviting outside agencies, and how to create the invitation in AIM.

# Indicator 13

**Indicator 13** is a set of standards that the federal **Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)** uses to measure how well schools follow transition planning requirements for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

By following Indicator 13, special educators help make sure that students with disabilities are prepared for their future, with the skills and supports they need to succeed. It's important because it sets clear guidelines for educators to follow. Below is a checklist of questions that special educators should go over when creating the student's transition plan to make sure it meets Indicator 13.

## Indicator 13 Checklist

- Does the IEP include measurable postsecondary goals?
- Are the postsecondary goals updated annually?
- Are the postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments?
- Are there transition services in the IEP that will reasonably enable the student to meet their postsecondary goals?
- Do the transition services include courses of study that reasonably enable the student to meet their postsecondary goals?
- Are there annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs?
- Is there evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services were discussed?

- If appropriate, is there evidence that a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority (age 18)?

### Indicator 13 Resources

**Indicator 13 Checklist and Cross-Reference Tool**

Arkansas Transition Services has an Indicator 13 Checklist Tool that provides further guidance on each question/standard, and examples of how to prove you have met each one.

**NTACT:C Indicator 13 Checklist**

The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition also has a checklist for Indicator 13 Items, with directions on where to find them/write them into the IEP.

## Graduation Requirements

A regular high school diploma is defined in federal law. The definition includes the following requirements:

- A regular high school diploma is the standard diploma most students in a state earn.
- It must meet the state's **academic standards** and cannot include:
  - GED (General Equivalency Diploma) or HiSet (High School Equivalency Test)
  - Certificate of completion
  - Certificate of attendance
  - Any other credential that is less than a regular diploma, like one based only on Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals.
- It can also include higher-level diplomas that require students to go beyond the standard requirements.

While federal law provides these guidelines, each state determines the academic standards students must meet to earn a regular diploma. **Some**

**states offer an alternate diploma for students with significant cognitive disabilities—Montana does not offer this option.**

Federal law also requires states to make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to eligible students until they either:

- Graduate with a regular high school diploma, or
- Age out of eligibility.

In Montana, students with disabilities are eligible for special education services until their 22nd birthday or until they graduate with a regular high school diploma, whichever comes first.

## Graduation and Transition IEPs

When a student with a transition IEP reaches their senior year, the IEP team must complete the graduation section of the IEP. This section helps the team determine when the district's obligation to provide FAPE will end—either upon graduation with a regular high school diploma or when the student ages out, exceeding the age of eligibility for FAPE.

For students returning for an additional year after their senior year, that year is treated as an extra senior year. It is important to remember: once a student with an IEP graduates with a regular high school diploma, or ages out before meeting graduation requirements, they are no longer eligible for special education services. In both cases, the school must provide a Prior Written Notice (PWN) and Summary of Performance (SOP) to the parent and to the student if the student is 18 or older.

## Graduation Requirements Resources

Montana has minimum graduation requirements, but each school district can add to this list. Search for "high school graduation requirements" on your district's website to find the most recent version of the state's minimum, and your school's own requirements too.

The Office of Public Instruction gives examples of how to document the student's graduation status in the transition IEP: MT Transition IEP High

School Graduation Section and examples of what to include in the Prior Written Notice: **OPI Example of PWN for High School Seniors**

# Summary of Performance

The Summary of Performance (SOP) is a required document for students with an IEP who graduate with a regular high school diploma or age out of special education services. Its purpose is to help students, families, and adult service providers understand the student's strengths, needs, and abilities as they prepare for life after high school.

The SOP includes:

- A summary of the student's **academic achievement** (reading, writing, math, etc.)
- A summary of the student's **functional performance** (daily living, social skills, work-related skills, communication, etc.)
- **Recommendations** to help the student and future service providers support the student in meeting their postsecondary goals (education/training, employment, and independent living)

The SOP explains what the student is good at, what areas may be challenging, and what supports or strategies have been effective. It is designed to give the next team—such as college disability services staff, job coaches, employers, or adult agencies—a clear picture of the student's strengths, needs, and recommended supports. This information helps ensure the student receives the right support in college, at work, or in the community.

The SOP must be completed by the end of the student's final year of high school.

## Summary of Performance Resources

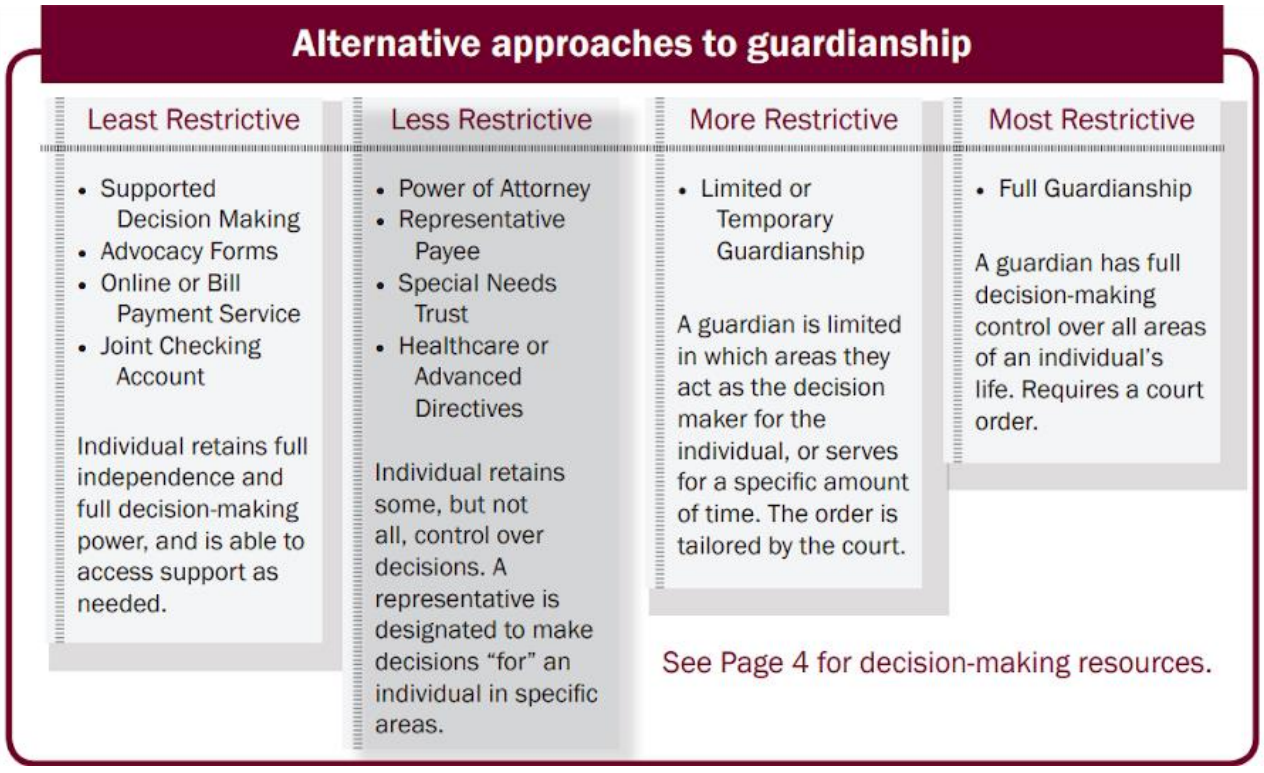
**OPI Summary of Performance**

This handout from the Montana Office of Public Instruction outlines the steps to record the student's SOP in the Individualized Education Plan.

# Alternatives to Guardianship

Many parents help their young adult children, with or without disabilities, by offering emotional support, advice, money, or a place to live. Young adults with intellectual disabilities or autism might also need help making decisions. When they turn 18, families may need to take legal steps to help them with important choices. There are different kinds of decision-making supports that can be personalized to meet each person's needs. These supports can help with specific areas, like health or money, and can range from informal help to formal legal arrangements.

In Montana, the law says that families need to start with the less restrictive choices, like **supported decision-making**, before trying to get full guardianship of their adult child. Families can start by talking with their loved one about what support they need and can also get advice from other families, school staff, counselors, or legal experts.




The table above from The Rural Institute's Transition Resource Project, gives an outline of how families can support their adult children, from **least restrictive (supported decision making)** to **most restrictive**

**(guardianship)**. Visit this link for a copy of the full, 4-page handout: https://transition.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/www/wp-content/uploads/Adult_Guardianship_factsheet_FINAL_10.3.19.pdf

# Transfer of Rights

Before the student with an Individualized Education Plan turns 17, the special education teacher must inform them that they will become an adult at age 18--this is called the **Transfer of Rights**. Special educators must notify families about this because when the student turns 18, they become an adult and can make their own decisions about school and services. This means parents no longer have the legal right to make those decisions for them. Notifying families helps them understand this change and gives them time to plan if the student needs extra help, like guardianship or power of attorney, to make decisions after they turn 18. For this reason, special educators can also give the Transfer of Rights notification at the student's first Transition IEP meeting to make sure they have enough time to plan. Once the special educator has notified the student of the Transfer of Rights during the IEP meeting, the parent signs the document, and they have officially been notified.

## Transfer of Rights Resources

**Alternatives to Guardianship**

Families may need more information on alternatives to guardianship and supported decision-making. They may not be aware that our state requires these options to be considered before going after full-on guardianship. The Rural Institute's Transition Resources Project has helpful factsheets, toolkits, and webinars on options.

**OPI Transfer of Rights**

Montana's Office of Public Instruction outlines the Transfer of Rights notification process and where to record it in the IEP.

**OPI Transfer of Rights Brochure**

Montana's Office of Public Instruction has a brochure on the Transfer of Rights that outlines the school's responsibilities, the educational rights that transfer over, and how to prepare the student.

# Procedural Safeguards

Procedural safeguards are rules that protect the rights of the student and their family during the student's individualized education planning. They are written into federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

A Summary of Procedural Safeguards

- **Parental Consent**: Parents must agree before certain actions, like inviting outside groups to meetings.
- **Meeting Notices**: Parents must be told in advance about IEP meetings so they can attend (meeting notices should be easy to understand/ in the guardian's native language when necessary).
- **Right to Participate**: Parents and students have the right to be involved in decisions about the transition plan.
- **Confidentiality**: The student's personal information is kept private.
- **Dispute Resolution**: If there's a disagreement, there are ways to solve the issue, like mediation or a hearing.

## Procedural Safeguard Resources

The Montana Office of Public Instruction has a booklet with all of the procedural safeguards described in detail. You can access an e-copy here: **IDEA Special Education Part B Procedural Safeguards Notice**

If you have any difficulty understanding these rules, or have questions, you can reach out to either of the following organizations:

**Disability Rights Montana**
Website: https://disabilityrightsmt.org/contact-us/
Phone: (406) 449-2344

**The Montana Empowerment Center**
Website: https://mtempowermentcenter.org/contact/
Phone: (877) 870-1190

# Summary of Performance

The **Summary of Performance (SOP)** in a transition IEP is a document that provides an overview of a student's strengths, needs, and achievements before they graduate or exit school. It includes information on the student's academic skills, functional abilities, and how they perform in areas like work, social skills, and daily living. The SOP helps students and future service providers understand the student's abilities and areas that may need support after high school. It's meant to guide the student's transition to further education, employment, or independent living. The SOP should be complete by the end of the student's senior year of high school.

## Summary of Performance Resources

**OPI Summary of Performance**

This handout from the Montana Office of Public Instruction outlines the steps to record the student's SOP in the Individualized Education Plan.

**OPI Examples of SOP**

This handout from the Montana Office of Public Instruction gives examples of completed summaries of performance.