



Adult Services

Thinking about what is a desirable future for a student who is deaf-blind requires imagining how and where the individual will live, how he or she will occupy their time and what kind of social network will be available to the individual as an adult. Even at the early stages of the transition process, while the student is in middle school, the IEP Team should begin to address these questions. The development of the student's skills in the areas of communication, independent living, decision-making, and mobility influence and impact the student's options for their future.

It is also important to include people from outside of the school setting in these planning discussions. Like local accents or regional cuisine, the character and structure of each state influences planning for transition. The names of agencies and the way that they function vary widely across the states. What follows is an overview of very general areas to be considered in transition planning. State specific information is available through DB-LINK. State specific transition resources are also available in many areas.

In addition to the student, the family, the school-based team and the state deaf-blind project, the Helen Keller National Center has a national network of representatives serving young adults and adults who are deaf-blind. This HKNC Regional Representative can be a valuable asset to the transition team for the student who is deaf-blind. Contact information for the HKNC Regional Representatives for your state are in the [State](#) and [Regional](#) Resource lists.

Young adults with disabilities may be eligible for a variety of programs that provide financial support and/or medical insurance coverage. These supports may allow the individual to live more comfortably and independently as an adult. The major programs are Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid.

SSI is a Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes). SSI is designed to help people who are aged, blind, and disabled, who have little or no income. SSI provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. For further information about SSI see <http://www.ssa.gov/notices/supplemental-security-income>. Social Security has a toll-free number that operates from 7AM to 7PM, Monday to Friday: 1-800-772-1213. If you have a touch-tone phone, recorded information and services are

available 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our toll-free "TTY" number, 1-800-325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

It is possible to receive SSI even if you have some income, for example salary from a part time job. It is also possible, in some circumstances, to save money for a special purpose, like a specialized computer or a wheelchair accessible van, without having the savings negatively effect your SSI payments. This program is called the Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS). For further information about PASS see <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/11017.html>. For more information, ask Social Security for the booklet, Working While Disabled-How We Can Help (Publication No. 05--10095).

Medicaid is the major source of public funding for long-term services and supports provided in home and community settings. For general information about Medicaid contact the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore MD, 21244-1850, Toll-Free: 877-267-2323 or TTY, Toll-Free 866-226-1819

Or see <http://cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/consumer.asp>. For very detailed information about the variety of ways that states can use Medicaid to fund services see <http://www.keystonehumanservices.org/pdffiles/primerpt.htm>.

For an example of how a Medicaid waiver has been used to fund services for individuals who are deaf-blind see <http://www.tsbvi.edu/Outreach/seehear/fall01/waiver.htm>. If you do not have Internet access, call DB-LINK for either of these articles, (800) 438-9376.

Each state also has one or more vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies. Some states have specific VR agencies for the Blind or Deaf. VR agencies may have a Deaf-Blind Specialist, counselors who work specifically with the individuals who are Deaf or Blind, or they may have VR Counselors who work with all agency clients regardless of specific disability. In VR agencies you can find people with expertise with regard to employment, technology, assessment, training and a variety of other services. For more detailed information about VR see http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/dep/PP_1.pdf

The VR programs in your state are listed in the [State](#) and [Regional](#) Resource lists.

Many students who are deaf-blind may also receive services from state agencies designed to offer training and support to individuals with developmental disabilities. These services may include case management, training, day programs, recreational services, residential services, and other kinds of

community support. Developmental disabilities programs in your state are listed in the [State](#) and [Regional](#) Resource lists.

There are also a variety of consumer organizations and independent living centers that may provide support and social connections for students as they transition from school to adult living. These groups are also listed the [State](#) and [Regional](#) Resource lists.

Betsy McGinnity, DB-LINK, 2005