

# **SECURING A FUTURE FOR YOUR CHILD WITH A DISABILITY**

**A Guide to Adult Programs  
For Adults with Disabilities  
in Alexandria, Arlington,  
Fairfax & Falls Church**



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

**November 2016**

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

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

The printed version of this guide is prepared periodically. As information changes, updated information and resources may be found in the Securing a Future for Your Child Toolkit on our website. If you would like to be notified of changes, contact [dmonnig@thearcofnova.org](mailto:dmonnig@thearcofnova.org) to be added to a distribution list.

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For additional Resources including:

- Attorneys Specializing in Special Needs Trusts
- Selected List of Support Coordinators for Persons with Disabilities
- Reporting Tips for Beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Programs
- Comparison of Special Needs Trust v. ABLE Act
- And more,

Visit The Arc of Northern Virginia's Transition Tool Kit at

<https://thearcfnova.org/programs/transition/securing-future-child-disability/transition-toolbox/>



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## INTRODUCTION

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

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

- 80% of families surveyed don't have enough money for needed care and almost half report having more caregiving responsibilities than they can handle
- 85% report that their adult family member with ID/DD was not employed either full- or part-time
- 62% of families have no long-term care plan
- 75% can't find after school care, community services or summer activities for their loved one
- 59% report they don't have enough information to make good choices about housing options
- 65% report that they don't have enough help in planning for the future.<sup>1</sup>

### About Transition POINTS

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

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

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

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

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

### Help for You, the Parent

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

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

### Your Rights and Responsibilities

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

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

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

## SECURING A FUTURE FOR YOUR CHILD WITH A DISABILITY

As the parent of a child with a disability, until now you and the school system have shared the responsibility of how your child will spend the majority of his or her time during the day. Most likely your child lives with you, goes to school, and perhaps engages in activities sponsored by the school system or in which other peers participate.

However, once a child becomes a legal adult at age 18, the young adult, the parents and family must take the lead in defining and navigating the future. This means researching and advocating for services in areas such as work, recreation, and housing. It also means making arrangements for your child's long-term financial security.

The Center on Transition Innovations at VCU offers Tips on Transition Planning for Parents at [www.centerontransition.org](http://www.centerontransition.org).

- 1. Love your child unconditionally, believe in him or her, provide encouragement, dream big!** You are your child's biggest advocate. Support and love them as only parents can in this exciting time.
- 2. Insist on student voice.** The student's voice should be present whenever he or she is the subject of conversation.
- 3. Increase student involvement with the transition process.** A great way to build self-determination for a young adult with a disability is through the IEP process.
- 4. Research resources and do your homework.** It is easy to become overwhelmed with emotions during the transition process. Researching best options and practices provides a powerful tool to advocate for your child.
- 5. Be open-minded and think outside the box.** Just because it's never been done, doesn't mean that it can't be done. It can never hurt to discuss an idea concerning transition.

**6. Collaborate with adult services.** Community adult services provide valuable support and programming once your child exits school services. Learning about the various services and building relationships with providers early will ease the transition to adult services.

**7. Increase family involvement in the transition planning process.** Your child is the center of the IEP and you know your child best! The more the family is involved, the more your child's voice will be heard.

### What's in this Guide

Making decisions for a grown up child with a disability is complicated. To help you with this task, this document addresses the following issues:

**Who's in charge of key life decisions.** Parents want to give their child the greatest degree of independence possible that still guarantees that person's safety and well-being. The law provides a range of options for safeguarding an adult with a disability, from powers of attorney to guardianship and conservatorship.

**Whether your adult child is eligible for government support.** Beginning at 18, an adult with a disability may qualify for monthly income from the Social Security Administration and for Medicaid. Some persons with a disability may also benefit from both short and long term funding from public funds and Medicaid Waiver funds for services.

**What kind of jobs and day support services are available.** Planning for jobs starts early before a child gets out of school, with vocational assessments and (ideally) some volunteer job experience. If your child is found eligible for adult services, localities may offer vocational testing, as well as help in finding, training for and getting support on the job.

**Which recreational activities are best.** Recreational activities are important for keeping people healthy as well as giving them a social outlet. Both local governments and non-profit groups offer recreational and sports programs for young adults with a disability.

**How he or she will get around.** Transportation training for persons with disabilities is available in all three localities. In addition, local transportation

companies (including bus, subway, and taxis) in Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax offer programs to increase convenience and reduce the cost of transportation.

**Where they'll live.** This is likely the biggest unknown parents face—where their child will live. Safety, cost, availability, and convenience are all factors in deciding where an adult child with a disability can and wants to live. At present, there are not enough residential placements to meet demand. Priority for public-supported housing is given depending on the level of disability and urgency of need. For more information on housing resources, see *The Arc of Northern Virginia's Guide: Finding A Home for People with Disabilities*.

Even if your child won't graduate from the school system until age 22, several steps must be taken by the time he or she reaches age 18. Look at tasks marked ASAP in the "Checklist for Parents" for decisions to be made right now.

**How will they advocate for themselves.** No one has a greater stake in the outcome of transition planning than the student with a disability. The student should be an active, participating member of the transition team, as well as the focus of all activities. Developing self-knowledge is the first step in self-advocacy skills. Learning about one's self involves the identification of learning styles, strengths and weakness, interests, and preferences.



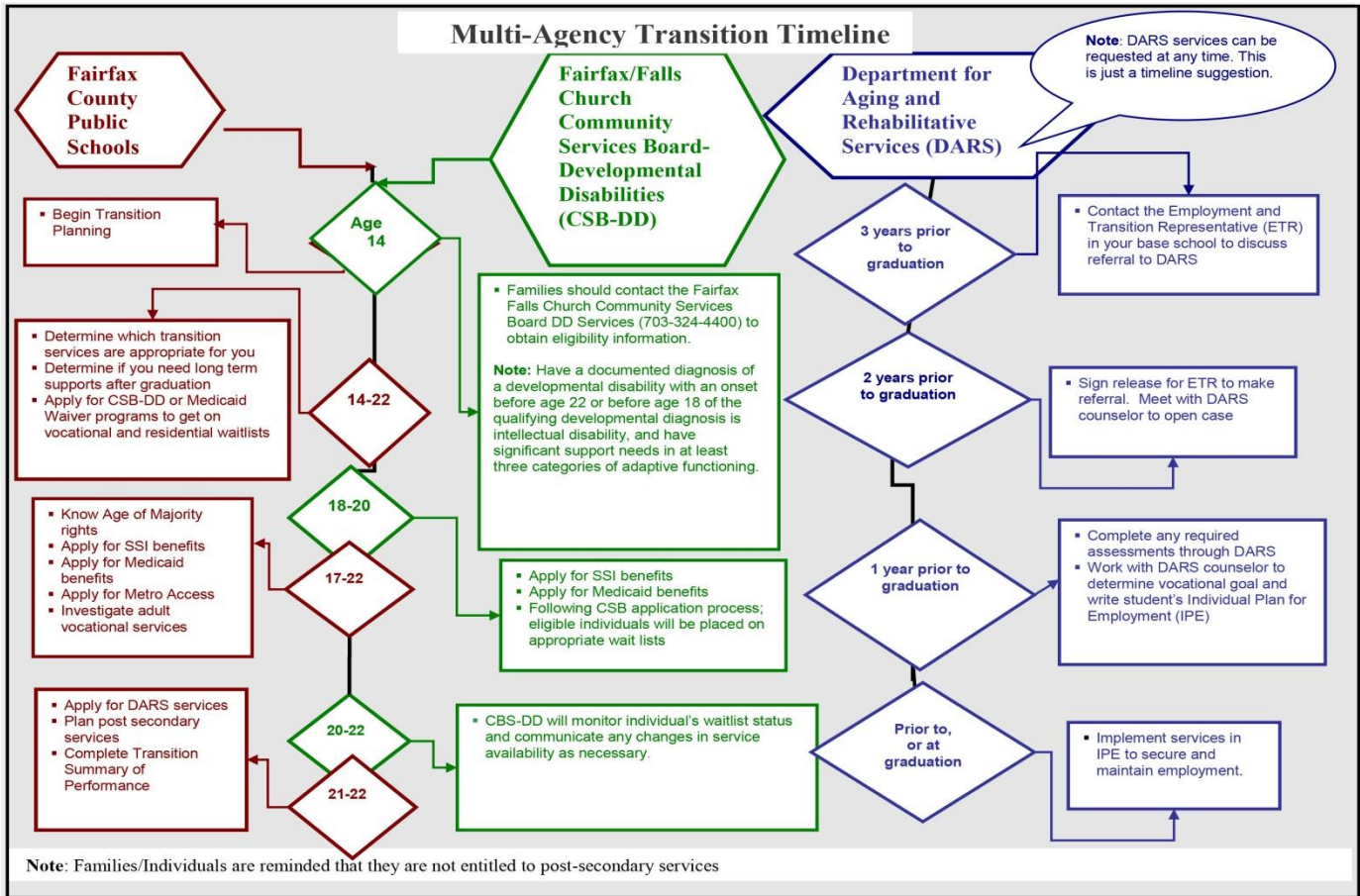
**Securing a Future: A Checklist for Parents**

Step to Take by Age	Estate/ Legal	Post-HS Education	Job/Day Support	Leisure	Transport	Housing
<b>ASAP</b>						
Create file for key documents	x					
Have a will drawn up for parents	x					
Create a Special Needs Trust	x					
Determine if <b>child</b> with disability qualifies for Supplementary Security Income	x					
Explore person's eligibility for Medicaid waivers. Get on wait list(s).	MAY	BE	LONG	WAIT	LIST	
<b>Ages 12-14</b>						
Keep record of child's aptitudes, vocational & leisure interests			x	x		
Discuss child's needs with local therapeutic recreation department				x		
<b>Age 14-16</b>						
Include transition goals in IEP, as well as transportation & vocational ones; explore eligibility for Dept. of Aging & Rehabilitative Services (DARS) vocational training		x	x	x	x	
If using public transit, obtain Metro reduced-fare ID or MetroAccess cards					x	
Explore eligibility for adult services with school or CSB; fill out application and release of information forms			x			x
<b>Age 16-18</b>						
If college-bound, research colleges & visit campuses; meet w/ disability support services.		x				
Gather information on employment and day support programs; open case with DARS	Eligibility	is not a	guarantee	of x	DARS	services
Determine eligibility for <b>adult</b> services through appropriate local agency			x			x
<b>Age 17 (or 12-18 mo. before leaving school)</b>						
For college-bound, take required tests; arrange interviews, visits. Meet with office of disability services & determine eligibility for on-campus services.		x				
Visit employment/day support providers			x			

### Securing a Future: A Checklist for Parents

Step to Take by Age	Estate/ Legal	Post-HS Education	Job/Day Support	Leisure	Transport	Housing
<b>Fall of senior year</b>						
Apply to post-secondary schools		x				
<b>No earlier than 17 yrs., 6 months</b>						
Explore power of attorney, guardianship or other options. Contact attorney if needed.	x					
<b>1 month before 18th birthday</b>						
If necessary, have attorney prepare final documents for new legal relationship	x					
<b>Month of 18th birthday</b>						
Apply for Supplementary Security Income (SSI)	x					
<b>Age 18-22</b>						
Update will. Inform family about wills, trusts, guardianship, etc.	x					
Explore adult recreational & social programs				x		
Prepare resume, do situational assessments, go on job interviews			x			
Once accepted for SSI, apply for Medicaid.	x					
If working, learn about managing job income and Social Security benefits	x					
If not already done, determine eligibility for Medicaid Waivers	x					
If not yet done, obtain Metro reduced-rate transit farecards/ID card					x	
If eligible for housing supports, visit local providers. If eligible for public housing/vouchers, get on wait lists						x
<b>Age 20-22</b>						
Before graduating, decide on & choose day support or vocational services & the non-profit organization that might provide the service.			x			
Determine potential use of public transportation or specialized transportation services. Explore travel training.					x	

## Transitioning from School to Work: A Trip through the Process



Although this timeline is for Fairfax and Fall Church, Alexandria and Arlington CSBs support similar timelines, and their processes for working with the public schools and with the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services are similar. Residents of Fairfax County should call the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Entry and Referral (703-324-4400) for assistance with transition. City of Alexandria residents may call the Alexandria CSB Central Intake (703-746-3535). Arlington County residents should call DHS/DD Services (703-228-1700).

## ESTATE AND BENEFITS PLANNING

**GOAL:** Ensure your adult child will receive federal and state benefits for which he or she may be eligible and will be taken care of in the event of a parent's death or disability.

### When to Take Action

### What Needs to Be Done

### Who Can Help

#### ***General Financial Planning*** **ASAP**

A **will** is critical to ensuring that your wishes are carried out regarding how and to whom your assets are divided after your death. If you have an heir with a unique needs of **each** of your children and not jeopardize the benefits or services of your heir with a disability and/or the relationship between the siblings and family members.

Contact your family attorney for a will and general estate planning. A separate document called a special needs trust should be created for the child with a disability (see below).

Some families also find it useful to see a financial planner.

#### ***Special Needs Trust*** **ASAP**

Create a stand-alone trust document to allow a disabled person to have an unlimited amount of assets held in trust without affecting his/her eligibility for federal benefits programs.

For general information on special needs trusts, see [www.nsn.com/frequently.htm](http://www.nsn.com/frequently.htm). See also Appendix.

The Arc of Northern Virginia provides a pooled special needs trust program that provides the family and the individual with a disability an affordable way to save and invest resources to enhance the quality of the person's life. Find out more at: [www.thearcofnovatrust.org](http://www.thearcofnovatrust.org)

If not using The Arc of NoVa's trust program, contact an attorney about writing a special needs trust. *Not all attorneys are able to do these documents.* See The Arc's online toolkit at <https://thearcofnova.org/program/s/transition/securing-future-child-disability/transition-toolbox/>

#### ***Letter of Intent*** **ASAP**

This document provides detailed information on your child's life, as well as your wishes for his or her future. Not legally binding, but invaluable to those who may have to take over child's care.

## ESTATE AND BENEFITS PLANNING

**GOAL:** Ensure your adult child will receive federal and state benefits for which he or she may be eligible and will be taken care of in the event of a parent's death or disability.

### When to Take Action

#### ***Supplementary Security Income (SSI)***

ASAP for benefits for **child** with a disability

2months before age 18  
Benefits for disabled adult

The month your child turns age 18

Once receiving Social Security Benefits

### What Needs to Be Done

Determine if your **child (under age 18)** might qualify for SSI. The child must meet the Social Security Administration's strict definition of disability and must have few or no financial assets. *Parents' assets and income are taken into consideration.*

Determine a person's eligibility for SSI as an **adult** with a disability. The adult with the disability must meet functional disability and income/asset requirements (less than \$2,000 of assets in their own name.) *Parents' income and resources are not counted*

**Apply for** SSI, if your adult child meets the disability and income requirements.

Beneficiary **MUST** report any earnings to Social Security., including work income, one-time payments, child support, or payments from a trust.

### Who Can Help

You can complete a large part of the application by visiting the website at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/ssi.htm> You also need to call toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 and ask for an appointment with a Social Security representative to complete the application either by phone or in person. For help with general rules for applying, contact Marilyn Morrison at Community Work Incentives Coordinator, 571-339-1305 [mmorrison@vaaccses.org](mailto:mmorrison@vaaccses.org)

Start your application by visiting the website at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/ssi.htm> You also need to call toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 and ask for an appointment with a Social Security representative to complete the application either by phone or in person.

NOTE: Try to fill out the forms and prepare supporting documentation before meeting with the Social Security representative.

NOTE: You should charge your disabled dependent who's receiving Social Security benefits for rent in the family home, food, medical expenses and clothing. Rent charged must be at least 30% of the current maximum benefit to get that maximum benefit. See Social Security regulations for details. For help in working and managing public benefits: Marilyn Morrison (contact info above)

## ESTATE AND BENEFITS PLANNING

**GOAL:** Ensure your adult child will receive federal and state benefits for which he or she may be eligible and will be taken care of in the event of a parent's death or disability.

### When to Take Action

### What Needs to Be Done

### Who Can Help

#### *Explore Power of Attorney/ Guardianship/Conservatorship*

At age 17

Get information about the pros and cons of different types of legal relationships that guide decision making for an adult with a disability. Options range from a representative payee to guardianship and conservatorship.

See explanations of options in Appendix.

For information from the Virginia Guardianship Association, visit [www.vgavirginia.org](http://www.vgavirginia.org)

Not before 17 years and 6 months

If you are seriously considering guardianship, contact an attorney experienced in such proceedings.

See attorneys listed online in The Arc Toolbox. <https://thearcofnova.org/program/s/transition/securing-future-child-disability/transition-toolbox/>

1 month before 18<sup>th</sup> birthday

Have attorney prepare final documents.

#### *Medicaid Health Insurance ASAP*

*If your child has qualified for SSI, he or she is automatically eligible for Medicaid. You still need to fill out an application.*

[www.dmas.virginia.gov](http://www.dmas.virginia.gov) for general information. However, you must apply through your local Dept. of Human Services; *if already receiving SSI, ask for the Medicaid short form.*

**Alexandria:** Dept. of Human Services, (703)746-5700  
**Arlington:** DHS/DD Services, (703)228-1300  
**Fairfax:** Department of Family Services, (703)324-7500

#### *Private Health Insurance*

A person with a lifelong disability can stay on their parents' insurance indefinitely. For new insurance plans, a disability cannot be considered a pre-existing condition for children under 19.

For help with understanding Medicaid and private insurance issues, contact Virginia Insurance Counseling & Assistance Program (703)324-5851

## ESTATE AND BENEFITS PLANNING

**GOAL:** Ensure your adult child will receive federal and state benefits for which he or she may be eligible and will be taken care of in the event of a parent's death or disability.

### When to Take Action

**Medicaid Waiver Programs**  
**ASAP** to get on waiting list

### What Needs to Be Done

Persons with developmental disabilities may also qualify for certain services under the Medicaid Waiver Programs.

The State of Virginia funds waiver slots, but funding is currently inadequate to meet needs statewide.

### Who Can Help

See The Arc of Northern Virginia's website  
<https://thearcofnova.org/programs/waivers/all-about-waivers/>  
See more information in the appendix on page 23  
Also, for general information,  
<http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/individuals-and-families/developmental-disabilities/my-life-my-community>

#### To Apply for DD Waivers

Alexandria City CSB  
(703)746-3400  
Arlington DHS/DD Services:  
(703)228-1700  
Fairfax/Falls Church CSB/DD  
Services: (703)-324-4400

#### For the EDCD Waiver

Alexandria City: (703)746-5700  
Arlington County: (703)228-1510  
Fairfax County: (703)324-7500

**Employment/Day Support**  
**Services**

**ASAP**

Begin process of determining your child's eligibility for adult employment and day support services from your locality.

**Your child MUST have a diagnosis of a developmental disability and meet level-of-functioning requirements to be funded by the local Community Development Board.** You will need to fill out an application form and provide a psychological evaluation of your child and sign a release allowing DHS access to any needed medical/psychological records.

**Alexandria:** Alexandria Community Services Board Intake  
703-746-3400  
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/dchs/adultservices/default.aspx?id=50382>

**Arlington:** DHS/DD Services: 703-228-1510 <https://aging-disability.arlingtonva.us/programs/dev-disability/>

**Fairfax:** Fairfax-Falls Church CSB/DD Entry & Referral 703-324-7500  
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb>

## POST-SECONDARY, EMPLOYMENT AND DAY SUPPORT SERVICES

**GOAL:** To arrange for appropriate post-secondary, employment, volunteer and/or day support activities for your child after he or she has left high school.

### When to Take Action

### What Needs to Be Done

### Who Can Help

#### ***Vocational Assessment***

Ages 12-14

Begin and maintain a record of your child's interests and strengths, career exploration activities, and skills

Determine with teachers ways that school activities could prepare your child for employment possibilities

Vocational assessments and employment services may be coordinated prior to graduation, depending on eligibility and available funds, through your local school system or the Virginia Dept. for Aging & Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

Ages 14-16

IEPs should include transition goals, including vocational ones, at age 14

Age 16-22

If not already done, determine your child's eligibility for adult employment or day support services--including support from The Department of Aging & Rehabilitative Services (DARS)-- with school transition coordinator and county support coordinator

DARS may provide short term support to adults with disabilities to prepare for and engage in gainful employment. Students must meet DARS eligibility criteria. See Appendix for more information on state vocational programs. [www.vadrs.org](http://www.vadrs.org) (703)359-1124

The transition coordinator at your child's high school is the best first stop resource for information on post-secondary and employment options.

#### ***Alexandria City Schools Transition Coordinators***

Jim Cooney, Employment Support Specialist, (703)824-6800 ext 6892 [james.cooney@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:james.cooney@acps.k12.va.us)

Angela Brown, Employment Support Specialist, (703)824-6800, X6254 [angela.brown@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:angela.brown@acps.k12.va.us)

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



## POST-SECONDARY,EMPLOYMENT AND DAY SUPPORT SERVICES

**GOAL:** To arrange for appropriate post-secondary, vocational, volunteer and/or day support activities for your child after he or she has left high school.

### When to Take Action

### What Needs to be Done

### Who Can Help

#### ***Arlington Schools Transition Coordinators***

Joyce C. Kelly, Wakefield HS  
(703)228-6728 [joyce.kelly@apsva.us](mailto:joyce.kelly@apsva.us)

Karen Sherman, Yorktown HS:  
(703)228-2545  
[karen.sherman@apsva.us](mailto:karen.sherman@apsva.us)

Micah Stein-Verbit , Arlington Career Center (703)228-5081  
[Micah.stein@apsva.us](mailto:Micah.stein@apsva.us)

Thomas Sweet, Washington-Lee  
(703)228-6265,  
[thomas.sweet@apsva.us](mailto:thomas.sweet@apsva.us)

Brian Stapleton, Arlington Community, Langston, Career Center, H-B Woodlawn (703)228-6063  
[Brian.stapleton@apsva.us](mailto:Brian.stapleton@apsva.us)

Bob Smith, Stratford (703)228-6445  
[robertsmith@apsva.us](mailto:robertsmith@apsva.us)

#### ***Fairfax County Public Schools Career & Transition Services***

Ann Long, Coordinator (571)423-4150  
Fairfax has Employment and Transition Representatives at each of its 29 high schools and centers. For more information on these services visit  
<https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/career-and-transition-services>

## POST-SECONDARY, EMPLOYMENT AND DAY SUPPORT SERVICES

**GOAL:** To arrange for appropriate post-secondary, employment, volunteer and/or day support activities for your child after he or she has left high school.

### When to Take Action

### What Needs to be Done

### Who Can Help

Age 12-17

Get information about organizations that provide employment and day support services through written materials and resource fairs

**Vendor Resource Fairs.** Arlington and Fairfax County hold annual fairs in the fall.

**Flash Forward.** Postsecondary Education & Employment Options. Held annually and hosted by Fairfax County Public Schools..

Age 17 or 18 months before leaving school

Meet with transition coordinator who can help you arrange visits with provider organizations or you can schedule a tour on your own.

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

Before graduating, decide on & choose day support or vocational services, & the non-profit org that might provide the service.

### *Post-secondary Academic Options*

If your child is interested in post-secondary education, many programs exist to help students with disabilities take courses and/or get a degree.

Also visit the Heath Center, an online clearinghouse on post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities, at [www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu) For other options, see [www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net)

2 years before leaving high school

Research college programs and make visits with the student and meet with the office of disability services on campus.

See Appendix for post -secondary resources

Junior year of high school

Take required tests; arrange interviews and more visits

Fall of senior year

Apply to post-secondary schools or programs

## RECREATION

**GOAL:** To enable your child to participate in recreational and leisure activities.

### When to Take Action

### What Needs to Be Done

### Who Can Help

By age 12

Begin and maintain a record of your child's interests and strengths.

#### **Alexandria**

Alexandria Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities, Therapeutic

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=45758>

703-746-5422

Beginning at 12 and repeated as needed throughout lifetime of child

Fill out any required accommodation forms; this varies by jurisdiction.

These would be updated each year and continue on into adulthood.

#### **Arlington**

Department of Parks and Recreation  
Therapeutic Recreation Office

<https://parks.arlingtonva.us/therapeutic-recreation/>

703-228-4740

Contact your local therapeutic rec office or talk to a teacher/case manager to determine activities that would match your young adult's interests.

18+

If new to a TR/adapted program, ask to complete an intake with a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS)

#### **Fairfax**

Fairfax Therapeutic Recreation Services

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/trs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/trs)

703-324-5532

When ready to take a class

Call the Therapeutic Recreation office and register; request an accommodation if needed.

See also FCPS Parent Resource Center  
Adapted Sports and Recreation

<http://www2.fcps.edu/dss/osp/prc/documents/AdaptedSportsRecreationGuide2016.pdf>

Your locality may also be able to make accommodations in general recreation (non-TR) classes or camps. Be sure to request accommodations in advance.

Both public and private organizations run sports, social, and therapeutic programs for individuals with disabilities. See list in Appendix.

Many private organizations have their own intake and assessment processes. Be sure to ask if a free evaluation or intake is available. When requesting accommodations for programs, ask which accommodations they are willing and/or able to make.

## TRANSPORTATION

**GOAL:** To enable as much independence as possible in getting to/from activities by teaching transportation skills and taking advantage of lower-cost transportation options

### When to Take Action

### What Needs to Be Done

### Who Can Help

Beginning at age 12

Consider child's readiness to learn travel skills and what skills need to be taught

See DMV web site at [http://dmv.state.va.us/webdoc/citizen/legal\\_presqa.asp](http://dmv.state.va.us/webdoc/citizen/legal_presqa.asp), or call the agency's toll-free telephone number at 1-866-DMV-LINE

Once child/adult is traveling away from home

Obtain a non-driver identification card from the Virginia Dept of Motor Vehicles. These cards have no age restriction and are available for anyone who does not hold a learner's permit or driver's license.

Age 12 - graduation

Include travel skills goals as part of IEP and as part of the Transition Plan

Travel training is provided free of charge by the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia. [www.ecnv.org](http://www.ecnv.org) 703-525-3268

Contact the Transition Coordinator for your child's school and/or Special Education support coordinator at school in advance of the IEP meeting

To ensure reduced transit fares, obtain a Metro Disability ID card from Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The card enables eligible persons with a disability to obtain reduced rates on Washington-area bus, subway and rail.

To download an application for the ID card, see: [http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/doc/Reduced\\_Fare\\_Application.pdf](http://www.wmata.com/accessibility/doc/Reduced_Fare_Application.pdf) Applications are also available at Commuter Stores in Arlington

Find out more about accessible transportation options in Virginia, see: [www.commuterpage.com/paratran.htm](http://www.commuterpage.com/paratran.htm).

Investigate MetroAccess options.

See Appendix for a list of places to obtain applications for the Metro Disability ID card and to purchase SmarTrip cards.

## HOUSING OPTIONS

**GOAL:** To have your child live in the community when the time is right for him or her to leave the family home.

### When to Take Action

### What Needs to Be Done

### Who Can Help

ASAP

Get on waiting lists for housing as early as possible. Sign up for newsletters such as <http://e-ffordable.org/> (Fairfax County) to keep informed on waiting lists.

See appendix for types of housing options available.

A list of contracted residential providers is in the Appendix.

In child's teenage years

Planning for housing is very challenging for a variety of emotional and financial reasons. Begin the planning process in early adulthood, even if you want your child to live with you for the foreseeable future. It is much better for housing decisions to be made thoughtfully and methodically over a period of years than in a crisis situation.

At age 18

With support coordinator, learn the distinctions among options. Visit potential residences and look at virtual house tours on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/videoatTheArcofNoVa>

By 18, be sure to apply for Medicaid, determine legal authority, set up a special needs trust, and be assigned a support coordinator. If not already done, get on housing wait lists.

A person's housing options depend on the level of functioning and what support programs (such as SSI, Medicaid waivers) the child qualifies for.

Placements are based on urgency of need rather than length of time on a waiting list. If a family's need is less critical than that of others who've applied, the process may take several years.

## APPENDIX 1: KEEPING GOOD RECORDS

Gathering information for and keeping key documents on hand will make it easier to carry out the advocacy and caregiving tasks you will face through-out the lifetime of your child with a disability. For example, when applying for SSI, you must demonstrate that your child has a qualifying disability. If you are a Representative Payee, you must file annual reports on how benefits were spent. You may have to prove guardianship to doctors, pharmacies, health insurance companies, banks, and social service agencies.

The first step is to establish a filing system that works for you. Then copy or scan important documents for easy access and keep originals in a safe place. **Be sure family members and your attorney know where these documents are.**

### Letter of Intent

One of the most important documents to have in your child's file is a Letter of Intent in which you describe your child's current life and express your values, wishes and vision for his or her future. Although not legally binding, a Letter of Intent is invaluable to those who will take over the care of your child. What goes into the document will vary with the individual but would probably include:

**Your vision of your child's future:** what goals you have for your child's life, where they would live and with whom, and what activities to maintain.

**Your child's vision of his or her future.** Whenever possible, include your child's ideas and desires in the document, such as ensuring that a favorite family remains a strong presence in their life, keeping a pet, or working in a specific industry or worksite.

**Description of personal qualities.** Future care-givers would benefit from knowing the unique aspects of your child: overall personality and mood, talents and strengths, degree of independence, medical or behavioral challenges, and sense of humor.

**Specifics on the individual's daily life:** school or work schedules; weekend activities, including religious education or attendance; bedtime routines; food and clothing preferences and sensitivities; preferred toys,

games, and exercise routines; and typical outings, for example.

**Medical history:** This section can be brief (diagnosis, current treatment and medication regimes) but then should state where to find more detailed information (see below).

**Living expenses.** Consider including annual costs of items such as food and rent, medical visits and equipment, health insurance, recreational activities and vacations, etc., to give future caregivers an idea of how the individual's special needs trust and benefit monies might have to be spent.

**Contact information:** family members, friends, doctors/therapists, preferred pharmacy, school or employer information, lawyers, trustees and backup guardians, insurance agents, banker and financial planners, etc.

For more on the rationale for a Letter of Intent, see <http://www.child-autism-parent-cafe.com/letter-of-intent.html>

### Documents to Keep on File

In addition to a Letter of Intent, create and/or collect and keep on file:

**Basic identification documents:** Birth certificate (often need the original), Social Security card, driver or non-driver's license, passport, Medicaid card, health insurance card.

**Bank information,** including any accounts opened for the benefit of your child, Representative Payee accounts, numbers of any debit or credit cards your child is allowed to use and associated PIN numbers.

**Legal documents** such as wills, special needs trusts, guardianship orders, power of attorney or conservatorship papers. Names of backup guardians and trustees can be kept here as well as named in the Letter of Intent.

**Medical history,** including diagnosis, evaluations, past and current treatments and therapies (including providers' contact information, dates of treatment, and facility where treated), and prescription records.

**Financial records**, including any evidence relating to assets or resources of the disabled person, tax returns, pay stubs or other evidence of income, and payments for medical services and equipment.

## APPENDIX 2: ENSURING HEALTH INSURANCE

Having adequate health insurance is an important element in securing your child's financial as well as physical health. Adult children with a lifelong disability may stay on their parents' health insurance indefinitely (non-disabled children are not covered after age 26).

Steps you can take now include:

- Applying for Supplemental Security Income payments for your child with a disability. If your child qualifies for this program, it is much easier to get him or her Medicaid coverage.
- Exploring options and costs of health insurance for your child once you are no longer working.

### Private Employer Health Plans

The Affordable Care Act of 2010 extended healthcare coverage for families and individuals and provided important protections for individuals with disabilities.

Dependents with a lifelong disability can remain under your employer-sponsored policy beyond age 26. Also, job-based and new individual plans won't be allowed to deny or exclude coverage to any child under age 19 based on a pre-existing condition, including a disability. These same plans won't be able to exclude anyone from coverage or charge a higher premium for a pre-existing condition including a disability.

### Medicaid

Medicaid is a federal health insurance program available to low-income persons, the elderly and people with a disability. One way to get Medicaid is to qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If you meet the requirements for SSI, you will meet those for Medicaid.

You can have private health insurance and still be covered by Medicaid or FAMIS Plus (excluding Plan First). *If you have other insurance, the other insurance plan pays for medical services first.* Having other health insurance does not change the Medicaid co-payment amount, if one is required, that you will pay to providers as a Medicaid enrollee.

### Health Insurance Premium Payment Program

If your child has Medicaid, the Health Insurance Premium Payment (HIPP) can help pay all or part of your health insurance premiums.

Your health insurance plan may cover services that are not covered by Medicaid. HIPP allows you to have health insurance you might not otherwise be able to afford. HIPP evaluates the services covered under your health insurance plan and compares the average Medicaid cost for your Medicaid eligible family member to the cost of your health insurance premium.

Information is available on the DMAS website at [http://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/bp/medical\\_assistance/intro\\_page/more\\_facts/hipp.pdf](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/bp/medical_assistance/intro_page/more_facts/hipp.pdf) or call the HIPP Program at 800-432-5924.

### Information Resources

For more information on changes to private healthcare under the Affordable Care Act, see [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

For help with understanding Medicaid and private insurance issues, contact Virginia Insurance Counseling & Assistance Program, 703-324-5851.

Download a copy of the booklet "Medicaid and FAMIS -PLUS Handbook" at [http://dmasva.dmas.virginia.gov/Content\\_atchs/atchs\\_medbook-eng.pdf](http://dmasva.dmas.virginia.gov/Content_atchs/atchs_medbook-eng.pdf)



### **APPENDIX 3: APPLYING FOR BENEFITS: Social Security Disability Programs**

You may begin the application process for Social Security benefits in the month your child turns 18. The first step is to *determine eligibility* for any benefit program; the Social Security Administration (SSA) will decide which program is appropriate. For a video presentation on SSI/SSDI visit The Arc of Northern Virginia's youtube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFjtZzX68pQ&feature=youtu.be>

#### **SSI vs. SSDI**

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

**SSI.** SSI is a cash assistance program for those with limited income AND are either 65 years old or older or blind or disabled. Adult SSI beneficiaries must have limited income and resources (\$2,000 in assets); parents' income does not count for adult applicants. You do not have to have any work history. Monthly benefit payments are determined by the current benefit rate (\$733 a month in 2015), minus any "countable income." If eligible for SSI, you will also be eligible for Medicaid.

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

#### **Applying for Benefits**

The steps for applying are:

**Start with a disability report.** Go to the website at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/ssi.htm> and click on

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

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

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

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

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

- Paperwork will be mailed to you. Complete and return within the allotted timeline.
- The document generated during the phone interview will also be mailed, to be signed for accuracy.
- Before mailing anything back to the agency, be sure to make copies.

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

**Alexandria Office**

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

**Arlington Local Office**

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

**Fairfax Local Office**

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

**SSA Office Hours:**

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

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

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

- Checkbook or other papers that show a bank account number to have benefits deposited directly to a Representative Payee account
- A signed rent agreement between parent and child (to receive the full benefit). See “Housing and SSI Benefits” in this section.

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

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

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

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**The Representative Payee**

A representative payee is appointed by SSA to receive Social Security and/or SSI benefits for someone who cannot manage his or her money. Rep Payees should be comfortable handling financial records and be trusted to keep in mind the best interests of the disabled beneficiary.

A payee must keep records of expenses and be able to account each year for all spending of SSI funds. SSA sends out a "Representative Payee Report" annually; fill out the report promptly and mail it back, or you may submit the report online.

To be designated a Rep Payee, contact the local SSA office (see above). You must then submit an application, form SSA-11 and documents to prove your identity. SSA requires you to complete the payee application in a face-to-face interview.

Note that having power of attorney, being an authorized representative or having a joint bank

account with the beneficiary *do not* give you the legal authority to negotiate and manage the beneficiary's Social Security and/or SSI payments. See [www.socialsecurity.gov/payee](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/payee)

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## Housing and SSI Benefits

**SSI is intended to cover living expenses like rent, food, and utilities.** For example, it is recommended that you **charge your adult child rent** if he or she lives in the family home. **Rent charged must be at least 30% of the current federal benefit amount** (\$735 a month for 2017) to get the maximum SSI benefit. It is recommended that you research comparables for your area of rooms to rent and include that with the rental agreement. Be aware that SSI benefits may be reduced under the following circumstances:

In general, about one-third of your SSI benefit is assumed to be paying for housing expenses (rent or mortgage, utilities, property insurance/renter's insurance, etc.) and the other two-thirds for other eligible expenses like food and clothing. If monies from a special needs trust are used to purchase a home with a mortgage, and the **trust makes monthly mortgage payments**, then the beneficiary's SSI payments will be reduced by about one-third each month (the portion of SSI associated with housing).

Whether the home is purchased outright or with a mortgage, SSI payments will be reduced by slightly more than one-third if the **trust pays for household expenses** such as taxes, heat, electricity, water, sewer and trash collection.

See <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0500835300> and <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0500835901>

## Reporting Income

SSI beneficiaries **must** report any earnings to Social Security. This includes work income, one-time payments, child support, trust payments, etc. SSI is a needs-based month-to-month benefit. Any delay in reporting to SSA could mean an overpayment of benefits. Keep a record that you sent the documentation to Social Security. Certified mail is best or if you fax the information, keep the fax confirmation page.

For additional information on Reporting Tips for Beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Programs visit our Transition Toolkit online at <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/securing-future-child-disability/transition-toolbox/>

## APPENDIX 4: APPLYING FOR BENEFITS: Medicaid Waiver Programs

### APPLYING FOR BENEFITS: Medicaid Waiver Programs

This information is adapted from the The Arc of Northern Virginia's website. For more information, [www.thearcnova.org/programs/waivers](http://www.thearcnova.org/programs/waivers)

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

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

#### Eligibility Criteria

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

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

Developmental Disability Waiver that will be awarded will be based upon the needs of the person with a disability at the time they are awarded a Waiver.

- b. **Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction (EDCD) Waiver** The person must have a medical nursing need in addition to a disability
- c. **Technology Waiver** Person must need skilled nursing and be dependent upon technology-based medical support (e.g. tracheotomy, ventilator)

- (3) **Financial:** If the functioning and diagnostic criteria are met, then the child's income and assets are considered. Children under 18 must have no more than \$1,000 in their name including all accounts and assets other than those in a Special Needs Trusts. Special Needs Trusts are not considered when testing financial eligibility. People over 18 have an asset cap of \$2,000. Everyone receiving a Waiver has a monthly income cap of 300% of the current Social Security Supplemental Security Income amount (SSI is \$735 in 2017, so max monthly income is \$2,205).

#### Waiting List Eligibility

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

#### Services Covered Under the Waivers

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

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

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

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

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

**Where to Apply for Medicaid Waivers**

Alexandria City CSB: (703) 746-3400

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

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

For the EDCD Waiver Only, Contact:

Alexandria City (703) 746-5700

Arlington County (703) 228-1510

Fairfax County (703) 324-7500

## APPENDIX 5: CREATING AN ESTATE PLAN

All parents should have a will, and those who have children with a disability also need to create a special needs trust to protect any public benefits that child may receive.

If your child is approaching his or her 18th birthday (age of majority), you might also consider some form of legal support if he or she needs and will continue to need help with medical, financial, and legal decision-making. (See the next appendix on understanding legal authority.)

### Creating a Will

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

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

### Special Needs Trusts (SNT)

Special needs trusts (sometimes called supplemental benefits trusts) allow families to provide for the future financial stability of their loved one with a disability. Since some federal benefits programs impose severe limits on beneficiary's assets and resources, your son or daughter could be disqualified from benefits if he or she received (for example) an inheritance or proceeds from a lawsuit. However, the law allows families to set up a special needs trust (SNT) that can act as a repository for an inheritance, stocks, property, insurance settlements or other assets **without** a loss of public benefits.

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

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

### Two Kinds of Trusts

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

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

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

### Setting Up a Trust

Special needs trusts can, and should be, set up as early as possible as part of the parents' overall estate planning. Third-party special needs trusts can be funded while the parents are still alive (with the caveat that any money put in the trust cannot be withdrawn except to pay for services for the beneficiary).

Special needs trusts may be set up using an attorney in private practice (see the resources section) or through the auspices of a trust managed by a nonprofit such as The Arc of Northern Virginia ([www.thearcofnovatrust.org](http://www.thearcofnovatrust.org)).

For either option, you will have to pay fees to set up the trust and, possibly, to manage the funds. The Arc of

Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust program does not require a minimum deposit.

### Uses of Trust Funds

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

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

### Acting as Trustee

A trustee is the person who oversees trust assets and administers the trust provisions, including investing, account reporting and tax reporting, check writing, and disbursements. Professional legal and investment advice are crucial for trustees administering a special needs trust themselves.

However, for trusts set up with The Arc of Northern Virginia, the family does not have this burden: trust staff perform all administrative tasks and client relations and SunTrust Bank handles all fiduciary and investment duties.

For more information about being a trustee, download a free handbook at:

<http://www.specialneedsalliance.org/free-trustee-handbook>

### A Trusty Advocate

Having problems applying for benefits, developing a budget, finding a social outlet, or figuring out housing options for your loved one with a disability? If you've created a Special Needs Trust with The Arc of Northern Virginia, our Beneficiary Advocate is here to help on these and many other issues. Call (703) 208-1119 X120 for more information on resources available through this service. There is an hourly fee, which can be paid with monies from the Special Needs Trust.

### ABLE Accounts

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

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

ABLE Accounts do not replace the need for a Family Funded Special Needs Trust, but may be used in conjunction. ABLE Accounts are similar to First Party or Self-Funded Trusts in that they require a Medicaid payback upon the death of the beneficiary. To learn more about ABLE Accounts, visit [www.ablenlc.org](http://www.ablenlc.org). For a better understanding of the differences between Special Needs Trusts and ABLE Accounts visit, the Securing a Future for Your Child Toolbox on our website

<https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/securing-future-child-disability/transition-toolbox/>



## APPENDIX 6: UNDERSTANDING LEGAL AUTHORITY

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

### Dignity of Risk and Supported Decision Making

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

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

### Guardianship and Conservatorship

Guardians and conservators are appointed by a local court to protect an incapacitated person-- that is, someone who cannot receive or evaluate information

effectively to meet his or her health, care and safety needs, or to manage property or financial affairs.

A guardian and/or conservator is often appointed for a person with a disability. However, **only a Circuit Court judge can decide that a person is incapacitated** and appoint a guardian and/or a conservator to act for the person. The appointment of a guardian or conservator is not a routine matter, and it is appropriate to take it very seriously, as the legal system does.

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

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

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

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

### Considering Guardianship

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

Typically, the young adult has less than \$2,000 in assets; the only income is from SSI or earnings that



typically can be managed by a representative payee or by the individual with some assistance.

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

- **Your child will not be labeled "incompetent."** Virginia has eliminated that term from the law. Now a person is found to be "incapacitated" to the extent that they cannot make certain decisions.
- Overall, it is important to realize that guardianship is a **very flexible system in Virginia**.
- Guardianships can be **tailored to the needs of your child**, allowing parents to remain in a strong advocacy position.
- As part of that flexibility, **guardianship need not take away all or even most of the individual's rights**. It is very common, for example, to preserve the right to vote, the right to hold a driver's license, and other rights.
- Even under guardianship, your adult child **can still participate in decision-making** about his or her life to the extent of their capabilities. The guardianship order will typically say that the individual with a disability will be consulted and his/her wishes taken into account.
- **Your child remains eligible for government benefits**. There is no loss of government benefits because someone has a guardian. The guardian's income and assets are not counted when computing benefits for an adult individual with a disability.
- --Guardianship **does not make you financially responsible for the person under guardianship**. For example, parents who are guardians do not have to provide food and shelter for their child but would be responsible for making the *decisions* about where their child

would live and the kind of care he or she would receive.

- As a guardian, **you are not responsible for the financial, civil or criminal liabilities of your child**. If an individual under guardianship hurts someone or something, the guardian is not liable. If they were, few people would be willing to serve as a guardian.

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

To help determine if guardianship is the appropriate choice for your young adult, fill out the screener at <http://www.thearcofnova.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Thinking-about-Guardianship-checklist-2.pdf>

### Obtaining Guardianship

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

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

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

As a guardian, you are required to submit a report every year to the local Department of Social Services; the court will provide a form.

### **Weighing Alternatives**

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

However, if the person is not considered “incapacitated” but still needs help, the individual and his or her family may choose among several other options. These alternatives range from having a caregiver (who has no legal authority to make decisions) to giving a trusted person a durable power-of-attorney (may make all medical, legal and financial decisions).

For example, an individual needing some assistance may be able to sign a Power of Attorney or Advance Medical Directive, appointing you or another family member as their agent for decision-making.

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

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<sup>1</sup>Thanks to Kelly Thompson, Esq., for her work on this section and her insights on issues parents face in deciding on guardianship

### Determining a Decision-Making Role

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

## APPENDIX 7: WORKING WITH SCHOOL-BASED TRANSITION SERVICES

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

Localities vary in the services they offer to transitioning students. Ask if your school system offers any of the following:

**Functional life skills** programs to provide various skill development activities to increase career/technical integration, social competence, community integration, personal growth, health and fitness, domestic living, and functional academic skills.

**Job coaching services** for students who display job-readiness skills for independent employment, but who will need specialized, short-term support and training.

**School-based career assessments** to provide simple career interests and aptitude reviews to assist students in selecting fields of exploration or training.

**Individualized career assessments**, which may include individualized set of interest inventories, standardized tests and exploration activities designed to build a comprehensive picture of a student's interests, aptitudes, employability behaviors and career decision-making skills.

### City of Alexandria Transition Coordinators

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

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

Jim Cooney, Employment Support Specialist  
703-824-6800 ext.6892  
[James.cooney@acps.k12.va.us](mailto:James.cooney@acps.k12.va.us)

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

### Project Search

[www.projectsearch.us/Home.aspx](http://www.projectsearch.us/Home.aspx)

Locally, Project SEARCH operates a program at Inova Alexandria Hospital. This high school transition program is a one-year, school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates classroom instruction, career exploration, and relevant job skills training.

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

### Arlington County Transition Coordinators

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

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

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

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

Bob Smith, Stratford (703) 228-6445  
[robertsmith@apsva.us](mailto:robertsmith@apsva.us)

### Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP)

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

PEP aims to increase students' work readiness skills to enhance the possibility of their obtaining and maintaining work as an adult.

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

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

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

### **Fairfax County Transition Coordinators**

Career & Transition Services, 571-423-4150  
Ann Long, Coordinator  
Fairfax has Employment and Transition Representatives (ETRs) at each of its 29 high schools and centers. For more information on these services, visit <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/career-and-transition-services>

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

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

class, Education for Employment (EFE) class, and Academy Support.

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

### **Exploring Resources**

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

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

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

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

### **Parent Resource Centers:**

#### **Alexandria City PRC**

Special Education Family Resource Center  
TC Williams HS, 3801 West Braddock Rd, Alexandria, VA (703)824-0129  
<http://www.acps.k12.va.us/curriculum/special-education/prc/>

#### **Arlington Public Schools PRC**

<https://www.apsva.us/student-services-special-education/special-education-office-of-parent-resource-center/>  
2110 Washington Boulevard, Suite 158,  
Arlington, VA 22204 (703) 228-7239

## Fairfax County Public Schools PRC

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

Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services

2334 Gallows Road, Rm 105, Dunn Loring, VA 22027

(703)204-3941 [prc@fcps.edu](mailto:prc@fcps.edu)

The Commonwealth of Virginia also offers programs through the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) to help transitioning students:

### ***Post-Secondary Education Rehabilitation and Transition Program (PERT)***

The PERT program provides public high school students with disabilities with a 5-10 day comprehensive assessment of vocational, and independent living, social and recreational skills.

Eligible students must be age 16 and older, with a full scale IQ of 60 or evidence of good adaptive skills; the student must be returning to school the fall after the PERT session (in other words, you cannot be in your last year of school).

PERT offers the following:

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

To apply for PERT, contact the transition coordinator in your high school. You would need to have an open case with Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to be considered. For more information about PERT, go to: <http://wwrc.virginia.gov/PERT.htm>

## Appendix 8: EXPLORING INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS, TRANSITION PROGRAMS AND POST-SECONDARY RESOURCES

### Internship Programs

#### John Hudson Internship Program

This is a summer internship program in Fairfax County Government for college students and recent graduates with disabilities

(703) 324-5421 or

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/disabilities/internprogram.htm>

#### Educating Youth through Employment (EYE)

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

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

### Transition Programs

#### MOST Program

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

- Self-sufficiency — including self-help, independent living and safety skills.
- Community — including social skills, transportation and recreation.
- Vocation — including employment, education, vocational training and day habilitation.

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

#### SPARC's Pawsome Learning Labs (PLL)

PLL is an adapted experiential program with skill building curriculums modified for a variety of learning styles and levels. This program training includes personal support attendants working side by side to develop strong communication and facilitation skills in

work settings with their clients. The program provides 2 years of training. The 1<sup>st</sup> year focuses on soft skills components and the 2<sup>nd</sup> year focuses on hard skills. Offered Tues/Wed/Thurs from 10am-1pm. Cost is \$400 per month. For more information, contact Jodie Wyckoff, [Jodie@sparcsolutions.org](mailto:Jodie@sparcsolutions.org) (703)967-5997 [www.sparcsolutions.org](http://www.sparcsolutions.org)

### Exploring Post-Secondary Resources

#### George Mason University LIFE Program

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

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

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

(703)993-3905

#### Northern Virginia Community College

Director of Disability Services

Estela Landeros Dugourd, PhD

[www.nvcc.edu/disability-services/](http://www.nvcc.edu/disability-services/)

[eldugourd@nvcc.edu](mailto:eldugourd@nvcc.edu)

(703) 764-5032

#### College Living Experience

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

[www.experiencecle.com](http://www.experiencecle.com)

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

CLE also offers a 3-week summer program for diverse learners entering their senior year or who have recently graduated. <http://experiencecle.com/summer-program-2/>

#### College Internship Program (CIP)

[www.cipworldwide.org](http://www.cipworldwide.org)

A comprehensive post-secondary support program for young adults on the autism spectrum and for those with learning differences.

## **Strive Program at NVCC**

Dr. Jean E. Robinson

301-292-7600 <http://www.striveinclud.org>

## **Post Secondary Online Resources**

[www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu) an online clearinghouse on post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities

[www.thinkcollege.net](http://www.thinkcollege.net) an online database to research college programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

[www.bestcolleges.com/resources/disabled-students/](http://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/disabled-students/) provides an overview of college resources for people with disabilities.



**HIGH SCHOOL vs. COLLEGE**  
**Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act**  
**And the Americans with Disabilities Act**

<b>High School (IDEIA)</b>	<b>College (ADA)</b>
An IEP drives all accommodations and services, involves the teachers and counselors, and always requires a parent's signature for students under age 18.	There is no educational plan, and instructors are not contacted except by the student. Parents often may not receive a student's grades without written permission from the student.
A student qualifies for public education because he/ she is the appropriate age and has a disability.	<i>Otherwise qualified</i> means that a student must meet all entrance and academic requirements, whether or not they receive accommodations.
Under IDEA, children with disabilities are entitled to a "free and appropriate public education."	Students have civil rights for which they must advocate to ensure equal access to higher education. No one is entitled to anything.
Public schools are responsible for appropriate assessment of a student's disabilities.	Colleges are not required to assess students, but can expect students to provide proof of disabilities with accepted guidelines.
Student placement is determined by the student's IEP team. Placement must be in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate for the student.	Students are integrated in the college community, and the environment may be adjusted through accommodations. Colleges do not deliberate to select an environment in advance.
A student's disability and needs are documented in his/her IEP. This information is available for staff involved with the student.	Need to Know: Students must give express permission for college professors to be notified of their disabilities. Students must initiate all actions toward receiving accommodations with each individual professor, for each course, for each semester. Students have the civil right to refuse accommodations they do not want or need.
Assessment, physical or occupational therapy, speech and language services, personal care and/or any other therapy is provided by the school, as outlined in the student's educational plan.	College students are responsible for any and all personal services, such as personal or medical care, just as if they were living independently and not attending college.
A student may receive untimed tests if the need is documented in his/her educational plan.	Untimed tests are not considered reasonable. Time extensions may be reasonable (typically time and one-half, but no more than double time).

## APPENDIX 9: PREPARING FOR WORK

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

And it takes time to figure it all out. Parents and students should take these five steps and get started in middle and high school thinking about work and work-related skills. For more information on employment for individuals with disabilities, see *Entering the World of Work: A Guide to Employment Programs for Adults with Disabilities in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax & Falls Church* online at <http://www.thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/transition-points>.

### Step 1: Get Work-Type Experience

Be creative in thinking about what your child already does and how that might teach job skills or be expanded into a career interest. Most people begin learning about the world of work through activities such as: chores at home; volunteering; activities pursued in Boy or Girl Scouts; and through courses that teach job-related skills like computer repair or animal care.

For volunteer experiences, explore the following:

#### Volunteer Match

[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

#### Volunteer Alexandria

Phone: (703) 836-2176

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

#### Volunteer Arlington

Phone: (703) 228-1760

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

#### Volunteer Fairfax/Falls Church

Phone: (703) 246-3460

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

### Step 2. Assess Work Interests and Skills

Use the Positive Personal Profile to get an overall picture what your son or daughter would like to do for a job or career and what talents, traits and skills they bring to the workplace. As much as possible, have your transitioning student participate in this conversation; this is the place for him or her to be honest about likes and dislikes and about any support they feel might be needed at the worksite.

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

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

the on-the-job environment, which includes the size of the physical space you'd work in, noise level, and indoors vs. outdoors.

your boss and co-workers (preferences for working as part of a team vs. more independently)

your work schedule: full time, part time, weekdays vs. weekends, day vs. night shifts, etc.

commute. Factoring in how to get to a job, how long that commute takes, and how much it costs is important in considering a job's suitability.

The profile should be a work-in-progress; consider reviewing it every year as you get more academic, volunteer or paid work experience.

### Step 3. Meet with the Transition Coordinator

The transition coordinator at your high school is the best first stop for information on post-secondary options, including vocational, employment, day support programs, college, and DARS. Localities vary in the services they offer to transitioning students.

Starting in 9th grade, IEPs should begin to include transition objectives to be achieved while the student is still in school. See list of Transition Coordinators in previous section.

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### **How Parents May Help**

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Work Experience ideas and possibilities to explore:**

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

#### **4. Pursue Eligibility for DARS**

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

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

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

#### **The Role of Your Counselor**

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

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

#### **Becoming a DARS Client**

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

#### **Referral**

Students with disabilities (those who have IEPs or a 504 Plan) are encouraged to apply for DARS

vocational services. Ask your transition specialist to refer you or you may call DRS at 800-552-5019 (voice) or 800-464-9950 (TTY)

#### **Intake**

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

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

#### **Eligibility**

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

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

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

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

## Evaluating Needs

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

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

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

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

Services that may have a cost share include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## DARS Resources

### Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center

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

### Life Skills Transition Program

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

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

workplace skills demonstrated by a client.

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

### **DARS Limitations**

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

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

### **Regional DARS Office Locations**

#### **Alexandria DRS Offices**

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

#### **Fairfax/Falls Church DRS Office**

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

#### **Manassas DRS Office**

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

#### **DRS Transition Sharepoint Site**

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

## **WORKING WITH AN EMPLOYMENT SERVICE ORGANIZATION**

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

### **The Role of the Employment Specialist**

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

- prepare for, get and stay on a job
- communicate with your family about your progress
- complete necessary applications & resumes
- assist you with initial training as needed
- identify transportation resources as well as travel training.

Employment specialists also work with individual employers to ensure there's a match between the job requirements and your skills, including:

- works with the employer to find out about available jobs
- works closely with hiring manager to determine the scope of work.
- analyzes the work environment to identify the essential tasks and cultural aspects of the department.
- Assist the human resources department with scheduling and planning the interview.
- Identify accommodations and/or adaptations you may need
- communicate with the employer to evaluate your progress;
- provide disability awareness training for co-workers as needed.

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

in the workplace.

### **Job Development Process**

There are four phases to the job development process:

#### **Situational Assessments (about 1 month)**

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

#### **Job Development (2-6 months)**

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

#### **Placement and Training**

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

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

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

### **How Parents May Help**

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

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

DARS may also close your case if you are no longer eligible, if services will not result in your employment, or you have not met your responsibilities.

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

#### **Choosing an Employment Services Organization**

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

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



## Reminders

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

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### Examples of Questions to Ask Employment Service Organizations (ESOs)

- How does your organization develop job leads for people?
- What companies have you placed people at and in what types of jobs?
- What type of feedback on job development and training do you provide for the family?
- Will the job developer also provide the on the job training or will another individual be hired to do so (i.e. job coach, natural supports set up, co-worker, trainer, etc.)?
- Describe some of the factors you consider when matching an employment site and the individual.
- What is your marketing approach with a new, prospective employer?
- How many people does your organization service in supported employment?
- What kind of activities will you do with the individual to better acquaint yourself with them?

- Do you provide travel training to and from the job site?
- What costs are involved and who pays? What sources of funding do you accept?
- What will our communication look like?
- What other support services or training does your organization provide? Social skills, independent living skills, communications skills training? Volunteer experiences? Community Integration Services?
- What do you do if I need additional help after I have found a job?

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

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

### Models of Employment & Funding Sources

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

DARS is the first payer for short term services needed to place individuals in Individual Supported Employment, Group Supported Employment or Pre-Vocational Services. Once an individual is able to

obtain and maintain a job for 90 days, DARS funding phases out and if available, Waiver or CSB (Community Services Board) funding phases in. Additional information can be found on p. 40. If DARS cannot serve an individual (he/she may not be found eligible by DARS or there is a waiting list, Waiver can provide all the funding from the beginning.

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

### **Supported employment falls into two models:**

***Individual Supported Employment*** is defined as intermittent support, usually provided one-on-one by a job coach to an individual in a supported position who, during most of the time on the job site, performs, independently.

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

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

### **Day Support Services include Non-Work Community Based Centers**

These services include all services that are located in the community rather than a facility and do not involve paid employment. These activities focus on supporting people with disabilities to access community activities where most people involved do

not have disabilities. These activities include general community integration activities such as recreation and leisure, improving social skills, activities of daily living practiced in the community and volunteer experience. This option typically serves individuals who have a high level of daily living support needs throughout the day and who need more support to develop vocational skills.

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

**EMPLOYMENT & DAY SUPPORT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

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

## EMPLOYMENT & DAY SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

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

## Alternatives to Traditional Employment & Day Services

### Self Directed Services in Fairfax County

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

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

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

### SPARC (Specially Adapted Resource Clubs)

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

### Adults with Disabilities Day Program (ADDP)

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

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

## Employment & Transition Support Service Providers

### Next Level Transition Consulting

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

[www.nextleveltransition.com](http://www.nextleveltransition.com) Contact: Scott Wilbur, Transition Director (571)332-2992  
[scottwilbur@nextleveltransition.com](mailto:scottwilbur@nextleveltransition.com)

### Starfish Savers

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

[www.starfishsavers.com](http://www.starfishsavers.com)

Contact: Larrie Ellen Randall (703) 631-9551

[Larrie.Ellen@starfishsavers.com](mailto:Larrie.Ellen@starfishsavers.com)

### Creative Models of Employment Support

#### Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates

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

[www.every1canwork.com](http://www.every1canwork.com)

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

#### Wildflour Bakery Chef-In-Training Program

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

### Arlington Weaves

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

information, contact Arlington DD Services at 703-228-1700.

For additional information on Employment, read The Arc of Northern Virginia's Transition POINTS Guide: Entering the World of Work

<https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/entering-world-work/>

## APPENDIX 9: HAVING FUN:

### Public Therapeutic Recreation Agencies

All three localities have Therapeutic Recreation Offices providing recreation and leisure opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Offerings for young adults include adapted classes, social clubs, and summer camps. If you are new to the area, you may request that an assessment be completed to help the staff understand the needs of your child.

#### City of Alexandria

Alexandria Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities,  
Therapeutic  
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/recreation/info/default.aspx?id=45758>  
703-746-5422

#### Arlington County

Department of Parks and Recreation  
Therapeutic Recreation Office  
<https://parks.arlingtonva.us/therapeutic-recreation/>  
703-228-4740

#### Fairfax County

Fairfax Therapeutic Recreation Services  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/trs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/trs)  
703-324-5532

See also FCPS Parent Resource Center  
Adapted Sports and Recreation  
<http://www2.fcps.edu/dss/osp/prc/documents/AdaptedSportsRecreationGuide2016.pdf>

#### Private Vendors

**Adaptive Learn-to-Skate** Kettler Iceplex offers Adaptive Learning I and II on Saturday mornings. Call 571-224-0555, [LTS@kettlercapitalsiceplex.com](mailto:LTS@kettlercapitalsiceplex.com), or visit <http://kettlercapitals.pointstreaksites.com>.

**Adaptive Martial Arts** (4-18) Jhoon Rhee Tae Kwon Do has beginner thru advanced classes to improve motor skills, coordination, focus and self control. Call Anna Rome at 703-532-7433, visit [www.adaptivetkd.com](http://www.adaptivetkd.com), or email [adaptivetkd@tkdlifeskills.com](mailto:adaptivetkd@tkdlifeskills.com) for more information.

**ArtStream** Drama and movement classes for children and adults with disabilities. Classes in Silver Spring,

MD, and Arlington, VA. <http://www.art-stream.org> or call 301-565-4567

**Capernaum.** An outreach mission of Young Life, a non-denominational Christian youth organization, Capernaum offers summer camp and twice-monthly social gatherings for teens 14-22 with physical and intellectual disabilities. Arlington & McLean: [caleb.younglife@gmail.com](mailto:caleb.younglife@gmail.com)  
Central Fairfax: [wonkamas@gmail.com](mailto:wonkamas@gmail.com)  
Northwest Fairfax: [younglifemike@gmail.com](mailto:younglifemike@gmail.com)

**Cool Aspies Club of Northern Virginia** a social club for young adults with Asperger's Syndrome and HF autism Contact [alexaspies@gmail.com](mailto:alexaspies@gmail.com) or visit on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cool-Aspies/329777750424551>

**Easter Seals of Northern Virginia** Recreational day programs offered at Walter Reed Community Center in Arlington (for adults only, 18+), minimum 2 days a week. 703-228-0964

**Eddies' Club, Inc.** Ages 4-21. Offers supervised, volunteer-run recreation program for children and teens with any disability. Activities located in Springfield. Fee based. 703-304-2330; [www.eddiesclub.org](http://www.eddiesclub.org)

**Expressive Therapeutic Movement.** Classes for ages 13+ with intellectual disabilities. Yoga, breathing exercises, rhythmic music, and body awareness are used to develop strength, flexibility, calmness, motor planning and self-empowerment. Springfield & Herndon, 703-218-0751 [etm.movements@gmail.com](mailto:etm.movements@gmail.com)

**Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA)** Offers workshops and groups for young adults. <https://www.jssa.org/service/individuals-with-special-needs/>

**Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia (JCCNV)** Offers groups and social clubs. <http://www.jccnv.org/specialneeds/special-needs/>

**Lifechanging Fitness** (all ages) Group and individual fitness sessions for individuals with disabilities. Program can help with cardio, strength, and even learning sports skills. Visit their website

[www.lifechangingfitness.org](http://www.lifechangingfitness.org) or call Ricardo Cunningham at 703-909-7971.

### **Little League Baseball/Challenger League.**

Ages 5-22. This volunteer-run program provides an opportunity to play ball. Players are teamed with a Majors 1 player, who acts as a buddy. Season is spring and fall. 703-351-5111 or visit [www.arlingtonlittleleague.org](http://www.arlingtonlittleleague.org)

**Special Olympics.** Provides opportunities for ages 8+ with intellectual disabilities to train and compete in a variety of Olympic-type sports. Contact Northern VA Special Olympics at 703-359-4301 or see [www.novasova.org/contact.html](http://www.novasova.org/contact.html)

**TOPSoccer** Ages 4-19. This is a volunteer-run skill development program. Season runs fall, winter and spring. In Alexandria, contact Bill Dwyer, [wmdwyerprop@aol.com](mailto:wmdwyerprop@aol.com), 703-684-5425 or <http://www.alexandria-soccer.com/tops.htm>. In Arlington, see [www.arlingtonsoccer.com/clubs/topsoccer](http://www.arlingtonsoccer.com/clubs/topsoccer). or contact Joe Lerner, 703-522-5866 (home); 703-395-7379 (cell).

For TOPSoccer in Burke, Chantilly, McLean and Reston, see the TOPSoccer website <http://www.vysa.com/programs/34617/34707.html>

### **Short-Term Respite Care**

For occasional, short-term respite care:

Jill's House

[www.jillshouse.org](http://www.jillshouse.org)

9011 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22182  
703-639-5660

Provides respite for children with disabilities (ages 6 to 17) in the Greater Washington DC area.

Camp Baker

<http://www.richmondarc.org/services/developmental-services/camp-baker-services/>

3600 Saunders Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227  
Contact (804) 748-4789  
or [CampBaker@RichmondARC.org](mailto:CampBaker@RichmondARC.org)

Respite care services and summer camp for ages 6 through adult.

Hartwood Foundation

<https://www.hartwoodfoundation.com/programs/>  
Contact [info@hartwoodfoundation.com](mailto:info@hartwoodfoundation.com) 703-273-0939  
3702 Pender Dr. Suite 410  
Fairfax, VA 22303  
Provides respite services for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

### **Summer Camps**

Local therapeutic recreation agencies offer summer programs for youngsters with disabilities. In addition, look at the following resources:

### **Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)**

List of summer camps/programs in Virginia for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities [http://www.peatc.org/peatc.cgim?template=news\\_and\\_events.template](http://www.peatc.org/peatc.cgim?template=news_and_events.template)

### **College Internship Program, Summer at CIP**

Two-week program teaching independent living skills and giving young adults a taste of the college experience  
[www.cipworldwide.org](http://www.cipworldwide.org)

### **College Living Experience**

Three-week summer program for diverse learners entering their senior year or who have recently graduated. <http://experiencecle.com/summer-program-2/> [www.experiencecle.com](http://www.experiencecle.com)

### **Jewish Community Center Camp JCC**

<http://www.jccgw.org/camp-youth-teens/camp-jcc/>

### **Summit Camp**

[www.summitcamp.com](http://www.summitcamp.com)

Sleep-away, travel and weekend camps for teens and young adults with attention and social issues

### **Young Life Capernaum Camp**

Five-day camp at Rockbridge in Goshen, VA for children, teens and young adults up to 23 years old.



## APPENDIX 10: Getting Around

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

### Non-Driver Identification Card

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

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

An adult ID card expires at the end of the month in which you were born when you reach an age divisible by five; e.g. 20, 25, 30, etc. A child ID card expires on the child's 16th birthday.

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

### Travel Training

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

### Metro Disability ID Card

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

The Metro Disability ID card is good on Metro buses in

the District as well as ART in Arlington. CUE, Fairfax Connector, RideOn, TheBus, VRE and MARC also accept it.

### Reduced Farecards/Bus Passes and/or SmarTrip Card

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

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

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

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

### Using Public Transportation

A good place to start to learn about available routes is CommuterPage.com with links to Virginia and Maryland bus and rail services. See [www.comuterpage.com](http://www.comuterpage.com)

In Alexandria, see [www.dashbus.com](http://www.dashbus.com)

In Arlington, see [www.arlingtontransit.com](http://www.arlingtontransit.com)

In Fairfax, see [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/connector/)

In Fairfax City, see [www.cuebus.org](http://www.cuebus.org)

### Disabled Placard/Plates

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

You can get a placard or a plate, or both. Placards offer flexibility since you can move it into any car in which you are the driver or a passenger.

You will need to pay a fee and you will receive your placard or plate on the spot. You can do it by mail, but the process does take longer.

### **Paratransit Options**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **STAR (Arlington County)**

STAR is Arlington's prearranged, reserved-trip service for persons with disabilities who are eligible for MetroAccess. STAR fares and ticket books for discounted taxi fares are available through the

Commuter Stores and CommuterDirect.com. Eligible seniors and disabled persons may register to order these products by calling Commuter Direct.com® at (703) 228-RIDE (7433), TDD (Virginia Relay Center - hearing impaired only): (800) 828-1120.

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

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

### **TaxiAccess (Fairfax County)**

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

### **Fastran (Fairfax)**

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

### **DOT**

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

The eligibility process is similar to that for Metro Access. For more information or to receive an application, please contact the Paratransit Coordinator at (703) 746-4079.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/tes/info/default.aspx?id=6538>

### ***Explore the Potential for Driving***

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

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

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

### **Technology to Empower Young Adults for Travel Training and in the Work Place**

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

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

able.

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

## APPENDIX 11: EXPLORING HOUSING OPTIONS

Finding safe, convenient and affordable housing for an adult with a disability is one of the most difficult challenges facing families at the moment. This section outlines in very general terms the housing options available for persons with and without a Medicaid Waiver. For more detailed descriptions of the housing options listed here, see *Finding a Home for Adults with Disabilities* on the Arc of Northern Virginia's website at <http://www.thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/transition-points>.

### Housing vs. Residential Services

Many individuals with developmental disabilities will need both housing and residential support services to be able to live in the community. It's important to understand the difference between these two in order to understand your adult child's options.

**Housing** is the physical place (house, apartment, rented room), the bricks and mortar, where one lives or the rental assistance to pay to stay in the physical home. (Group homes are not housing in this sense, see below).

**Residential services** refers to the support and supervision provided by caregivers hired by individuals or through an agency.

However, for some residential programs such as group homes, the physical housing and the residential services are tied together; *the housing is considered a residential service (not bricks and mortar). Because the cost of these programs is so high, only persons with Medicaid waivers typically can afford them.* Even with a waiver, the individual still has to pay a residential fee.

Thus, the three basic options are:

1. **For those with a Developmental Disabilities Waiver including the including the Community Living Waiver, Family and Individual Supports Waiver, and the Building Independence Waiver, the cost of support services is paid for by the Waiver once your support team identifies and secures an appropriate service.** However, the cost of rent is separate and must be paid for by the

individual with a disability. This is typically done with Social Security income, earned income, and possibly an additional housing subsidy.

2. **For those without a Developmental Disabilities Waiver,** it will be necessary to find resources to pay for the physical housing **and** support services (if needed by the individual).
3. **For those eligible for Waivers,** it is important to note that as of the printing of this guide, Virginia has limited funding from the "State Rental Assistance Program" set aside to allow people with developmental disabilities to live in affordable housing options. This program works like a housing voucher or rent subsidy. These are available to people not only with Developmental Disability Waivers, but also those on the waiting list for these Waivers. A number of people on the waiting list have used these funds to move and worked with either a live in attendant, natural supports (e.g., family coming by to help), and/or privately hired help to secure this limited housing opportunity while waiting for a Waiver. It is estimated this program will be open through at least 2017. Have you case manager contact Jeannie Cummins ([j.cummins@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:j.cummins@dbhds.virginia.gov)) to learn more about this program.

Because access to affordable housing is a challenge, there are lots of plans in the works to grow housing options. Our newly redesigned Developmental Disabilities Waivers offer a range of new options that provide or are tied to a range of residential services. Families are considering ways to privately funding housing, or to leverage a home they already own. To see more about the options available and how to make them work for you, visit our online toolkit. It included recorded webinars, slides, and other information on housing.

<https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/finding-home-adults-disabilities/home-toolbox/housing-toolkit/>

**Residential Options Funded by Medicaid Waiver.** If your loved one has a Medicaid Waiver, he or she will have some options for how may be able to live and get supports in a range of settings that combine or work with a variety of residences. These options are outlined below. Note that under the newly redesigned Waivers (as of September 1, 2016), options are available based upon the need of the person with a disability as well as the Waiver they have. The Community Living Waiver is designed to support individuals with the highest level and most complex needs, the Family and Individual Supports Waiver is designed to support people with anywhere from mild to high need, the Building Independence Waiver is for individuals over 18, with limited support needs. For more details on the Waivers, see page 23 of this guide.

Also, note the services followed by an asterisk are new as of September 1, 2016 and are still in the process of being brought online and licensed by providers, though they are available per regulations and funded.

<b>Disability Waiver Services</b>	<b>Community Living Waiver</b>	<b>Family &amp; Individual Supports Waiver</b>	<b>Building Independence Waiver</b>
<b>Group Homes-</b> 24/7 staffed home where 3-7 people with disabilities live. Homes usually have staff that rotate around the clock on shifts.	X		
<b>Shared Living*</b> - Individual lives with someone without a disability who is reimbursed for room and board in exchange for companionship	X	X	X
<b>Independent Living*</b> - Supports brought into the home focused on skill building and preparing for greater independence			X
<b>Sponsored Residential-</b> Option where person with disability lives with a paid caregiver in the home of the caregiver	X		
<b>Supported Living*</b> - Residence owned by a support provider that offers up to 24/7 help with support needs	X	X	

Visit

<https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/finding-home-adults-disabilities/home-toolbox/housing-toolkit/> for a huge online toolkit filled with information about non-congregate residential options. The site also showcases stories of people living in integrated housing options with a range of support needs.

Visit

<http://www.youtube.com/user/VideosatTheArcofNoVA> to see “virtual tours” of group homes, a sponsored residential, and a supported apartment.

## **Residential (Public) Program Options**

Options that provide housing and allow you to use either a Waiver, private funds, or natural supports to bring in services include:

### **1. Public Housing**

Public housing is federally funded housing made available to people with low incomes. Units are often owned by a local housing authority (PHA) and funded by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To qualify for public housing, an individual must meet the public housing authority’s low income requirements. In this situation, the individual must live in the specific housing developments built and owned by the local PHA in order to qualify for the subsidized housing. You could apply to have an additional bedroom in the unit for a live-in aide, if needed.

Unfortunately, the waiting lists for public housing units are very long. At the present time, no one is even able to get onto the waiting lists for Alexandria or Fairfax (the only Northern Virginia localities that operate Public Housing).

### **2. Housing Choice Vouchers**

Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) used to be called “Section 8 Vouchers.” A voucher allows low-income individuals and low-income families to rent from private landlords at a reduced cost. The tenant pays 30% of their income towards rent, and the voucher subsidizes the rest of the cost, up to an approved Fair Market Rent amount. Once you have received a voucher, you can take that voucher with you anywhere in the country after one year, assuming the new location is willing to accept and operate the voucher for

you. You could apply to have an additional bedroom in the unit for a live-in aide, if needed.

Waiting lists are long for this general population program, and at the present time the waiting lists are closed in Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax. HOWEVER, Virginia has limited funding from the “State Rental Assistance Program” set aside to allow people with developmental disabilities to live in affordable housing options. This program works like a housing voucher or rent subsidy. These are available to people not only with Developmental Disability Waivers, but also those on the waiting list for these Waivers. A number of people on the waiting list have used these funds to move and worked with either a live in attendant, natural supports (e.g., family coming by to help), and/or privately hired help to secure this limited housing opportunity while waiting for a Waiver. It is estimated this program will be open through at least 2017. Have your case manager contact Jeannie Cummins ([j.cummins@dbhds.virginia.gov](mailto:j.cummins@dbhds.virginia.gov)) to learn more about this program.

As with public housing, a person with a disability could use staff funded with their Developmental Disability Waiver or their ED CD Waiver to receive supports in a home they rent with a Housing Choice Voucher. In that situation, the person would be the tenant of the apartment.

## **Options with Private Funding**

Many individuals with disabilities do not qualify for a Medicaid Waiver and others are on long waiting lists for these services; their families must not only find appropriate housing but find ways to pay for it. However, housing created by families often has the advantage of more closely matching the individual’s needs and preferences, as well as having “built-in” monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms.

### **1. Microboards**

A circle of support is a group of family and friends who care about a person with a disability and volunteer their time to help support that person. When a circle of support incorporates itself as a corporate entity, it can engage in business transactions on behalf of the individual with a disability and become a microboard.



This formal designation as a microboard allows the board to qualify for low-interest home loans through the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA), [www.vhda.com](http://www.vhda.com). You can contact Bruce DeSimone at 804-343-5656 [bruce.desimone@vhda.com](mailto:bruce.desimone@vhda.com) to learn more.

In addition, microboards can:

- manage waiver supports (e.g. hire and train staff);
- provide property management and upkeep;
- hire a private vendor to provide waiver services;
- help problem solve during a crisis;
- provide referrals to and/or coordinate resources;
- act as a sounding board

Microboards are meant to be sustainable. The microboard will develop bylaws, a meeting schedule, a succession plan, and a scope of authority. To learn more, contact the Virginia Microboard Association at 757-460-1569, <http://virginiamicroboards.org/>, or [VirginiaMicroboards@gmail.com](mailto:VirginiaMicroboards@gmail.com).

## 2. Shared Apartments

A shared apartment is simply a rented apartment (home, condo, or townhome) shared with one or more other people. The advantages are cost sharing and companionship.

In a shared apartment, one, some, or none of the household members can have a waiver and/or care staff. However, with the waiver, you cannot “pool” support hours to have staff on site 24 hours/day. Each staff person must provide care for one individual with a disability according to that person’s plan of care.

## 3. Renting a Room

In this arrangement, the person renting the room typically has a private bedroom as well as access to common areas, like the kitchen and living room. The advantages are cost sharing and companionship. Another advantage is that the homeowner or primary lease-holder is responsible for the day-to-day needs of the home.

Again, the person renting the room could have a waiver and/or care staff, but they would need to be up front about this need and plan when they contact potential homeowners or lease holders to ensure everyone is comfortable with this situation.

## 4. Life Estates

In a life estate, a homeowner grants a “life tenancy” to a person with a disability (your child, for example) who is then entitled to live in that home for the remainder of his or her life. Upon the death of the life tenant, ownership of the home would revert to another family member, a non-profit, or a combination of both.

This may be a good option if the family has already paid off their mortgage or only has a small amount of the mortgage remaining. The family could deed or will the home to the adult child. If the home were deeded to the person with a disability while the parents were still alive, the parents could continue to reside there or decide to move out while the person with a disability continues to stay in the home.

Keep in mind that *many service providers would be hesitant to manage supports for a life tenant if they were not deeded the home after the life tenant passed away.* You would also need to have an agreement on care arrangements if the life tenant is no longer able to stay in the home because their needs or wishes change.

## 5. Shared Home Purchase

A group of families could get together and purchase a home. For example, three families could each put up a portion of the cost of a three-bedroom home. One person with a disability from each family would then live in the home.

For this model to work, the families would likely have to buy the home outright. If there were a mortgage, it would be very difficult to get the loans and deeds to work together, particularly if/when one of the residents wanted to move out. The families should work with their lawyers to draw up rules for selling shares of the home and shared costs.

## Finding a Roommate

It can be difficult to afford rent or a mortgage in Northern Virginia without having a roommate. Unfortunately, there are few resources for people with disabilities to find a roommate. You or your circle of support may find a roommate through friends, people in social or recreational clubs like Special Olympics, the

Independence Center of Northern Virginia, or online sites like those below.

Keep in mind that good friends do not necessarily make good roommates. To find out if someone may be a good roommate, try the following:

- Spend time together.
- Meet the person's friends.
- Find someone who has the same interests or hobbies as you.
- Come up with clear rules for what you need and can tolerate in a roommate (privacy, tidiness, noise, pets, etc.)
- Consider asking for a background check, references from past roommates, or proof that they can afford the rent and utilities.

### Websites to Search for Shared Housing

***TIPS:** When searching for shared housing opportunities on the Internet, err on the side of caution. Do not provide personal information such as your last name, phone number, full address or private email in your initial post or listing on a roommate search website. Instead, create a dummy email address (e.g., using Gmail or another service) and provide this email address in your listing. Use this email address or the website's messaging system to communicate with potential housemates about your housing search. In addition, when meeting a potential housemate for the first time, meet the individual in a public place such as a coffee shop, recreation center, mall or other place where there are others present. When you visit his/her home for the first time, bring a friend, family member or support person with you.*

<http://apartments.oodle.com> has a search function that allows you to select roommate rentals.

[www.easyroommate.com](http://www.easyroommate.com) enables searches by roommate criteria and housing characteristics. Results are displayed in a list which you can sort depending on how old the ads are, the rent cost, date available or zip code.

[www.roomiematch.com](http://www.roomiematch.com) involves completing a 15-20 minute Q&A survey about what you're looking for, where, when and with whom. The service emails you

matches based on your information. You must pay an annual membership fee to contact potential matches.

[www.RoommateLocator.com](http://www.RoommateLocator.com) is a free, simple online service that allows you to search for roommates by location, price range and certain features in an accommodation (e.g., smoking or pets allowed). Users can send a message to a landlord or member to ask for more details.

[www.RoommateNation.com](http://www.RoommateNation.com) permits users to submit a profile including the kind of property they are looking for and their lifestyle choices/preferences. Users can then search for a room or a member who needs a room, the location of a room, price range, and gender and smoking preferences. A one month membership upgrade allows users to view more extensive profiles and to send and receive messages.

[www.roommates.com](http://www.roommates.com) allows members to search for roommates or accept matching suggestions. Users complete profiles that focus on location and price range, as well as a description of themselves and the kind of person they would like to live with. Users who pay the membership fee can view complete member profiles and photos, comments and maps. Users also have access to RoomMail, which gives you a way to send and receive messages with other members without using your private email.

[www.Roommates4You.com](http://www.Roommates4You.com) is a free service which allows individuals to post an advertisement about themselves or a room they have to rent. There is no sign up system to just search for rooms or individuals that are available. Users can add contact information to the advertisement or contact other users through the roommates4you message system. Search options are based primarily on location and price range, and results can be filtered by date they were posted.

[www.roomster.com](http://www.roomster.com) asks users a variety of important questions to help match them with like-minded people (e.g., time they wake up, their profession, the amount of time they spend in the house, their hygiene and cleanliness levels). Searches and matches are based primarily on location and rental costs, each of which can be altered at any time to adjust your results. Users can sort by a number of variants. Non-paying members can send messages to other members, but not read



their replies. Users can send contact details in that initial email, but this is risky since users don't know other members yet. Upgrading membership opens up options and allows users to read and receive messages, and provides a more detailed look at members' likes, dislikes and habits.

**Northern Virginia Residential Service Providers (Medicaid Waiver Only)**

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Services Provided</b>	<b>Contracted CSBs</b>
Alexandria City CSB	720 North Saint Asaph St. , Suite 103 Alexandria, VA 22314	<a href="http://www.alexandriava.gov/C SB">www.alexandriava.gov/C SB</a>	703:746-3400	Residential	Alexandria
Chimes	3951 Pender Dr., Suite 120 Fairfax, VA 22030	<a href="http://www.chimesva.org">www.chimesva.org</a>	703:267-6558	Residential	Fairfax Alexandria
Community Concepts, Inc.	14000 Crown Ct., Suite 206 Woodbridge, VA 22193	<a href="http://www.Comconinc.net">www.Comconinc.net</a>	703:680.5127	Residential	Fairfax Alexandria
Community Living Alternatives	9401 Lee Hwy, Suite 406 Fairfax, VA 22031	<a href="http://www.cla-va.org">www.cla-va.org</a>	703:352-0388	Residential	Fairfax Alexandria Arlington
Community Residences	14160 Newbrook Dr. Chantilly, VA 20151	<a href="http://www.communityresidences.org">www.communityresidences.org</a>	703:842-2300	Residential In-home supports	Fairfax Alexandria Arlington
Community Systems, Inc.	8136 Old Keene Mill Road, Suite B300 Springfield, VA 22152	<a href="http://www.communitysystems.org">www.communitysystems.org</a>	703:913-3150	Residential Independent Living	Fairfax Arlington
Elite Healthcare Services LLC		<u>None</u>	240:460-8083	Residential	Alexandria
Estelle Place/Jireh Place LLC	17290 River Ridge Blvd. Woodbridge, VA 22191	<a href="http://www.estelleplacellc.com">www.estelleplacellc.com</a>	703:221-9600	Residential	Alexandria
Gabriel Homes	PO Box 710207 Herndon, VA 20171	<a href="http://www.gabrielhomes.org">www.gabrielhomes.org</a>	703:476-1592	Residential	Fairfax
Hartwood Foundation	3702 Pender Dr., Suite 410 Fairfax, VA 22030	<a href="http://www.hartwoodfoundation.com">www.hartwoodfoundation.com</a>	703:273-0939	Residential In-home supports	Fairfax Alexandria
Heritage House of Virginia	1075 Garrisonville Rd., Suite 109 Stafford, VA 22556	<a href="http://www.hhofva.com">www.hhofva.com</a>	540:657-9399	Residential	Fairfax
Jewish Foundation for Group Homes	1500 East Jefferson St. Rockville, MD 20852	<a href="http://www.jfgh.org">www.jfgh.org</a>	240:283-6000	Residential	Fairfax
Job Discovery Inc.	10345 Democracy Lane Fairfax, VA 22030	<a href="http://www.jobdiscovery.org">www.jobdiscovery.org</a>	703:385-0041	Residential	Fairfax Alexandria Arlington
Langley Residential Support Services	2070 Chain Bridge Rd., Suite G55 Vienna, VA 22182	<a href="http://www.langleyresidential.org">www.langleyresidential.org</a>	703:893-0068	Residential In-home supports	Fairfax
L'Arche of Greater Washington, DC	2474 Ontario Road NW Washington, D.C. 20009	<a href="http://www.larchewashingtondc.org">www.larchewashingtondc.org</a>	202:436-1133	Residential	Arlington DC
Pathway Homes	10201 Fairfax Blvd, Suite 200 Fairfax, VA 22030	<a href="http://www.pathwayhomes.org">www.pathwayhomes.org</a>	703:876-0390	In-home supports Supported Living	Fairfax
Resources for Independence of Virginia	10340 Democracy La. Suite 103 Fairfax, VA 22030	<a href="http://www.sunrisegroup.org">www.sunrisegroup.org</a>	703:218-1800	Residential Sponsored residential In-home supports	Fairfax Alexandria Arlington

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Services Provided</b>	<b>Contracted CSBs</b>
St. John's Community Services	7611 Little River TrnPk Suite 203 West Annandale, VA 22003	<a href="http://www.sjcs.org">www.sjcs.org</a>	703:914-2755	Residential In-home supports	Fairfax Arlington
Volunteers of America	12940 Harbor View Dr. Woodbridge, VA 22192	<a href="http://www.voachesapeake.org">www.voachesapeake.org</a>	703:497-9320	Residential In-home supports	Arlington

**\*\*** This list of residential providers is accurate to the best of our knowledge as of the printing of this guide. However, new services now available under the waiver redesign are rapidly developing and providers are adding new services on a rolling basis. Please check back frequently and work with your case manager to determine what providers may be able to meet your service needs.

## Appendix 13: Self-Advocacy

**Increase student involvement** with the transition process. A great way to build self-determination for a young adult with a disability is through the IEP process. Begin student IEP involvement early. Assist your child in communicating his or her needs, wants and dreams, but let his or her voice be heard!

- Have the student attend all meetings.
- Assist in understanding your child’s abilities, interests, needs, and preferences.
- Let the student express dreams and aspirations.
- Have the student be a part of the decision-making process.
- Practice participating and leading IEP meetings at home.
- Allow your child some freedom under safe circumstances. Yes, students might not succeed, but they need to find out how to handle adversity while you can still provide assistance.
- Allow your child to experiment and try different interventions and strategies. If one intervention, strategy, or approach doesn’t work, don’t give up, try another!
- Encourage your son or daughter to communicate with community agencies with your support.

### Resources for Self-Advocacy

#### I’m Determined

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

#### It’s My Choice

By William T. Allen, PhD from the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities [www.Mn.gov/mnddc/extra/publications/choice/Its\\_My\\_Choice.pdf](http://www.Mn.gov/mnddc/extra/publications/choice/Its_My_Choice.pdf)

#### "Dude, Where's My Transition Plan?"

A guide to promote student involvement in planning for life after high school.

<http://www.tnstep.org/uploads/files/Final%20Dude%20Transition%20Book.pdf>

#### People First for Young Adults

The Arc of Northern Virginia offers People First for Young Adults, a social and self-advocacy group for youth with disabilities ages 14-26. The group meets the second Tuesday of every month. For more information, visit [www.thearcofnova.org](http://www.thearcofnova.org).

#### Autism Speaks

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/transition-tool-kit/self-advocacy>

#### PACERS (National Parent Center on Transition and Employment)

<http://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/independent-community-living/self-determination.asp>

#### Parent Center Hub

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/priority-selfadvocacy/>

#### Sound Out

<https://soundout.org/intro-to-student-voice/>

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