

# Transition Guide

2017

## BUILDING A BRIDGE TO YOUR FUTURE



## LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL



We are happy to present the Transition Guide for families and their sons, daughters and loved one who have a diagnosis of **intellectual disability or a diagnosis of autism** and are preparing to transition from the educational to the adult system. The purpose of this guide is to provide information to register with the Montgomery County Developmental Disabilities program to access services and supports.

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

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

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

#### **Intellectual Disabilities**

- A diagnosis of Intellectual Disabilities prior to the age of 22
- Full-scale IQ of 70 or below
- Significant limitations in 2 or more areas adaptive functioning

#### **Autism**

- Enrolled in Medical Assistance
- A diagnosis of Autism prior to the age of 22
- Significant limitations in 3 or more areas of adaptive functioning

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

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



### **The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**

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

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

**The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**  
**1875 New Hope Street**  
**Norristown, PA 19401**  
**484-250-4340 or**  
**(800) 221-1042**

OVR services are short-term, generally for a 90 day period; after this time period, the Office of Developmental Disabilities can help by providing the supports and services you may need to continue your career. However, you must be registered with the Office of Developmental Disabilities to receive ongoing employment services through our Employment Providers.

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

**Get the facts ... Some individuals believe that benefits will be terminated when employed and this prevents them from pursuing employment. Your overall financial position usually improves when you work and in many cases you can continue to receive benefits. To understand your situation, the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA), administered by Disability Rights Pennsylvania offers individualized benefits counseling. See page 4 for information on benefits counseling.**



### **How to Apply for Medical Assistance**

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

To obtain benefits you may apply:

- online at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/Compass.Web/Public/CMPHome> (the fastest and easiest method)
- by visiting the local office in Norristown
- by downloading a paper application and mailing to CAO

[http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/form/p\\_035620.pdf](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/form/p_035620.pdf)

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



### **How to Apply for Social Security**

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

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

**Social Security Administration  
1700 Markley Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Norristown, PA 19401  
1-800-772-1213  
[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)**



**DISABILITY RIGHTS**  
PENNSYLVANIA



### Disability Rights Pennsylvania

#### Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)

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

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

A coordinator can discuss with you:

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

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

### Visiting Nurse Association Community Services

#### (VNA) Personal Navigator Program

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

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

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

**VNA Community Services, Inc.**  
**Personal Navigator Program**  
**1-800-591-8234**

## Know Your Options

Individuals and their families may want to explore various options to determine if the services and activities are a good fit. Being prepared helps the decision making process go quicker when funding becomes available.

| <p><b>Supported Employment—Career Assessment, Job Finding and Development and Job Coaching and Support</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p><b>Small Group Employment</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>Community Participation Support</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>In-Home and Community Supports</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Individual has one-on-one assistance by a <b>job coach</b> to obtain and keep competitive work.</p> <p>The length of time for the one-on-one assistance is based upon an individual’s need.</p> <p>In general, an individual is not supervised during all work hours.</p> <p>Individual earns minimum wage or more.</p> <p>Individual and employer may receive ongoing follow-up assistance by <b>job coach</b>.</p> <p>Individual works with non-disabled co-workers.</p> | <p>A <b>job coach</b> provides instructions at all times.</p> <p>Individuals with disabilities work in groups.</p> <p>Work occurs at businesses with non-disabled individuals.</p> <p>Minimum wage is generally received.</p> | <p><b>Community Participation Supports Providers</b> (formerly known as providers of pre-vocational and adult training facilities) offer individuals community participation to promote independence and self-determination.</p> <p>A <b>Direct Support Professional</b> assists at all times.</p> <p>Individuals plan activities that interest them.</p> <p>The amount of time spent in the community is based on the individual.</p> | <p>A <b>Direct Support Professional</b> provides instruction and supervision.</p> <p>Individuals may be offered this services in a small group or individually with the purpose of learning or maintaining knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Transportation is provided.</p> <p>Activities are individualized according to interests, preferences and interests.</p> |

## **SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR TRANSITION ACTIVITIES**

### **Age 14-15**

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

### **Age 16-17**

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

### **Age 18**

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

### **Age 19-20**

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

### **Age 21**

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

**This is important to understand: If an individual leaves the education system before the end of the school term of his/her 21st year there will be a gap in services. Education is an entitlement and services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism are based on eligibility requirements, the level of need for services and availability of funding.**

### **Local and State Transition Events and Meetings**

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

### **The Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) - Fall and Spring Transition to Adult Life**

#### **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2017**

The Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Transition sponsors a fall and spring ***Transition to Adult Life Resources Expo*** for youth with intellectual disabilities, autism and mental illness. ***The Expo will be on Thur., November 19, 2017 at the Upper Dublin High School.*** Local provider agencies, governmental organizations, fitness companies, social organizations, camps and post-secondary education programs provide personalized expertise to you and your family. Contact Kris Koberlein, [kkoberlein@mciu.org](mailto:kkoberlein@mciu.org) or **610-755-9400**.

There is also a ***Local Coordinating Council*** that works to promote effective transition for students with disabilities. The council is made up of parents, schools, provider agencies, businesses, and parents. Contact Kris Koberlein, [kkoberlein@mciu.org](mailto:kkoberlein@mciu.org) or 610-755-9400 if you are interested in attending.

### **The Montgomery County Office of Developmental Disabilities**

The Montgomery County Office of Developmental Disabilities offers free seminars and trainings for families, individuals, professionals and schools. Please contact Trish Golden at [pgolden@montcopa.org](mailto:pgolden@montcopa.org) or 610-278-3645 for upcoming events.

#### **Social Security Seminars**

Michael Walling, national expert on social security and other benefits, will offer a seminar on ***Maximizing Your Income***. Mike will present on ***April 12 and 13, 2018 at the MCIU***. Contact Trish Golden at [pgolden@montcopa.org](mailto:pgolden@montcopa.org) or 610-278-3645 to register.

#### **Registration, Eligibility and Services**

We offer free presentations on registration, eligibility and services to schools, parent groups and other interested parties in Montgomery County. We are available during the day and evening. To schedule your presentation please call Dina Scarci at [dscarci@montcopa.org](mailto:dscarci@montcopa.org) or 610-278-5666. **Contact Dina Scarci who will also assist you with intake and eligibility information.**



**Montgomery County  
Mental Health/ Developmental Disabilities/  
Early Intervention Program Office**

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

*Annetta McHale, DD Deputy Administrator  
Joanna Muth, DD Program Director*

**Montgomery County Commissioners  
Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH, Chair  
Kenneth E. Lawrence, Jr., Vice Chair  
Joseph C. Gale, Commissioner**