

**APPENDIX H
ARKANSAS TRANSITION PROJECT**

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ARKANSAS TRANSITION PROJECT

TRANSITION SERVICES

The term transition services (as outlined in IDEA) means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interest, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. 34 CFR §361.22(a)(2) provides that, if the student is determined eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, the student's IPE should be developed as early as possible during the transition process but no later than when the student exits the school setting.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by interested high schools and ATP prior to services being rendered. MOUs are reviewed annually and updated/revised as needed.

PURPOSE

Arkansas Transition Project (ATP) was established to address an identified gap in VR services for high school youth/young adults with disabilities. Transition Counselors assist youth/young adults who receive 504 accommodations or receive IEP services and are 10th grade or at least 16 years of age transitioning from high school to the career field of their choice. The intent is to connect the activities of high school students, higher education, and rehabilitation services to provide a continuum of year round supports which meet the needs of eligible youth/young adults with disabilities.

The integrated 8 continuum of services will:

- A. Assure that eligible youth/young adults as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, have a clear, direct, and primary voice in their individualized planning processes;
- B. Assure that eligible youth/young adults receive appropriate and necessary supports to help achieve long-range goals;
- C. Coordinate services to eligible youth/young adults to maximize their post-school outcomes and provide for a successful transition to appropriate work-based learning, internships, employment, independent living, and postsecondary education or training;
- D. Formalize referral procedures with appropriate agency (ies) to ensure eligible youth/young adults are provided opportunities for year round services;
- E. Ensure joint appropriate planning for each youth/young adult eligible for Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS).

- F. Ensure coordination of service delivery and follow-up/follow-along with education/employment/social/rehabilitation/habilitation/independent living services continuum as identified in IEPs and IPEs.
- G. Ensure joint training between cooperating agencies for staff development and other activities.

FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As outlined in the MOU ATP/High School agree to cooperate in providing appropriate transition services to youth/young adults with identified disabilities, in order to assure the youth/young adult's entry into suitable employment, postsecondary education or training, and independent living. It is mutually agreed that the following steps and procedures will be utilized to accomplish this goal:

- A. At the beginning of each academic year, Transition Counselor will meet with appropriate school personnel (i.e., counselors, department heads, principals, transition coordinators) to provide an overview of the comprehensive transition services available through this agreement, including eligibility requirements and services offered.
- B. Following the meeting between Transition Counselor and the participating high school, special education teachers will identify youth/young adults, beginning no later than grade 10 or age 16, with identified disabilities for likely referral to the ATP or other service providers if appropriate. If the youth/young adult and/or parent/guardian are interested, communication will take place to determine the general appropriateness of each referral, leading to obtaining a completed release of information form from the school (or other sponsor agency) prior to the referral. Periodic updates will be provided for school personnel and others that have a stake in the youth/young adult's life.
- C. Transition Counselor will provide consultative services in the areas of vocational and career planning, postsecondary education/training support strategies, internship possibilities, and employment preparation to school personnel, as requested, to facilitate preparing youth/young adult for transition to "adult service agencies". Consultation may occur at any time during the youth/young adult's secondary training, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth/young adult.
- D. Transition Counselor agrees to commit to attend and participate in all appropriate IEP, Transition Team, and Advisory Board meetings.

REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT SERVICES

Youth/young adults generally will be referred by school staff in the service area. Youth/young adults must meet eligibility requirements. Parent/guardian must sign consents for inclusion in the program if the youth/young adult is under 18. The school will submit any additional information that is pertinent and useful in assisting the ATP

Transition Counselor to determine eligibility and assist the youth/young adult and the counselor in identifying, selecting and pursuing appropriate career objectives.

Referral Procedures:

Initial referrals will be made within the first two months of each school year. Referrals will then be ongoing as appropriate throughout the school year. The high school will provide an individual list of high school youth/young adults who may qualify for ATP services to the designated ATP staff. This list will include youth/young adult's name, grade, age, ID number, school, disability, and recommended supports or accommodations and will be accompanied by a release of information form signed by youth/young adult and parent/guardian if referral is under 18. Each person on the list will be encouraged to make contact with ATP to explore services, rather than waiting for ATP personnel to contact them.

ELIGIBILITY

At age 14 or before, ATP will provide informational services and brochures regarding ATP services to any youth/young adult, parent or guardian, special education teacher or other school official who requests or as time allows outreach.

Youth/young adults must:

- Be 10th grade or 16 years of age or older
- Have a Section 504 plan which addresses transition service needs or have a current IEP which includes a transition plan
- Have a disability which constitutes a substantial barrier to employment.

Appropriate Releases of Information are required prior to individual services being rendered.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRANSITION COUNSELOR

1. Support empowerment and the exercise of informed choice by the youth/young adult with a disability.
 - Convey a high expectation of youth/young adults with disabilities.
 - Inform youth/young adult about the array of available community options.
 - Assist youth/young adults in understanding information and options throughout the decision-making process.
 - Connect youth/young adults with peer mentors.
 - Advocate for youth/young adults' rights.
2. Build partnerships
 - Provide leadership in the transition community to build a shared vision.
 - Assist in the leadership of Local Transition Coordinating Councils (LTCCs) to develop solutions and strategies.
 - Link to consumer groups and peer support. Develop mentoring opportunities.
 - Partner with community rehabilitation providers, training facilities, and institutions of higher education.
 - Involve employers in transition planning activities.

3. Provide technical assistance and consultation services (to groups of youth/young adults, parents, educators, and/or other transition partners). Topics may include:
 - Career exploration;
 - Job readiness training;
 - Soft skill development;
 - Self-advocacy skills;
 - Information about VR legislation, programs, available services, and comparable benefits;
 - Career fairs;
 - Transition planning; and
 - Disability awareness.

4. Transition Planning
 - Establish and maintain a process for receiving referrals of youth/young adults who receive special education and Section 504 services.
 - Develop comprehensive assessment.
 - Determine eligibility for Transition Services.
 - Engage in the on-going development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
 - Provide vocational counseling and guidance.
 - Provide and coordinate VR and other services.
 - Coordinate comparable benefits.
 - Develop accommodation strategies for employment.
 - Provide assistive technology programs and services for employment.
 - Provide placement services.

Before Graduation:

The Transition Counselor will receive referrals from the special education teacher no later than October of the senior year. All referrals will be accepted using the Arkansas Transition Referral Form 410. In addition to the referral form, the teacher will submit copies of school records, psychological evaluations and the Informed Consent signed by the parent or guardian (if the referral is under the age of 18). The school will submit any additional information that is pertinent and useful in assisting the counselor to determine eligibility and assist the student and the counselor in identifying, selecting and pursuing appropriate career objectives.

The Transition Counselor will complete an application at the earliest date possible upon receipt of the transition referral form and supporting documents. The Transition counselor must determine eligibility for services and ensure the development and approval of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) by the time the student leaves the school setting. (34 CFR §361.22 and 361.45) If the Transition-counselor is unable to complete the vocational assessment to determine eligibility within 60 days of application, (due to missed appointments) the counselor must notify the special education teacher or other official as soon as possible to enable the special education teacher to resume the IEP planning process.

The Transition Counselor will follow established procedures for referral, application, eligibility determination and IPE development consistent with informed choice.